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HENRY HOLT & CO., NEW YORK.

THE TIME MACHINE

AN INVENTION

BY

H. G. WELLS

"Fool! All that is at all
Lasts ever past recall."
—Browning

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The Time Traveler's Story and a part of the introductory conversation appeared as a serial in the *New Review*. Several descriptive passages in the story had previously appeared in dialogue form in the *National Observer*, and the explanation of the "principles" of Time Traveling given in this book is inserted from the latter paper. I desire to make the usual acknowledgments.

H. S. W.

477096

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THE TIME MACHINE.

CHAPTER I.

The Inventor.

THE man who made the Time Machine—the man I shall call the Time Traveler—was well known in scientific circles a few years since, and the fact of his disappearance is also well known. He was a mathematician of peculiar subtlety, and one of our most conspicuous investigators in molecular physics. He did not confine himself to abstract science. Several ingenious, and one or two profitable, patents were his: very profitable they were, these last, as his handsome house at Richmond testified. To those who

were his intimates, however, his scientific investigations were as nothing to his gift of speech. In the after-dinner hours he was ever a vivid and variegated talker, and at times his fantastic, often paradoxical, conceptions came so thick and close as to form one continuous discourse. At these times he was as unlike the popular conception of a scientific investigator as a man could be. His cheeks would flush, his eyes grow bright; and the stranger the ideas that sprang and crowded in his brain, the happier and the more animated would be his exposition.

Up to the last there was held at his house a kind of informal gathering, which it was my privilege to attend, and where, at one time or another, I have met most of our distinguished literary and scientific men. There was a plain dinner at seven. After that we would adjourn to a room of easy-chairs and little tables, and there, with libations of alcohol

and reeking pipes, we would invoke the god. At first the conversation was mere fragmentary chatter, with some local *lacunæ* of digestive silence ; but toward nine or half-past nine, if the god was favorable, some particular topic would triumph by a kind of natural selection, and would become the common interest. So it was, I remember, on the last Thursday but one of all—the Thursday when I first heard of the Time Machine.

I had been jammed in a corner with a gentleman who shall be disguised as Filby. He had been running down Milton—the public neglects poor Filby's little verses shockingly ; and as I could think of nothing but the relative status of Filby and the man he criticised, and was much too timid to discuss that, the arrival of that moment of fusion, when our several conversations were suddenly merged into a general discussion, was a great relief to me.

"What's that is nonsense?" said a well-known Medical Man, speaking across Filby to the Psychologist.

"He thinks," said the Psychologist, "that Time's only a kind of Space."

"It's not thinking," said the Time Traveler; "it's knowledge."

"Foppish affectation," said Filby, still harping upon his wrongs; but I feigned a great interest in this question of Space and Time.

"Kant——" began the Psychologist.

"Confound Kant!" said the Time Traveler. "I tell you I'm right. I've got experimental proof of it. I'm not a metaphysician." He addressed the Medical Man across the room, and so brought the whole company into his own circle. "It's the most promising departure in experimental work that has ever been made. It will simply revolutionize life. Heaven knows what life will be when I've carried the thing through."

"As long as it's not the water of immortality I don't mind," said the distinguished Medical Man. "What is it?"

"Only a paradox," said the Psychologist.

The Time Traveler said nothing in reply, but smiled and began tapping his pipe upon the fender curb. This was the invariable presage of a dissertation.

"You have to admit that time is a spatial dimension," said the Psychologist, emboldened by immunity and addressing the Medical Man, "and then all sorts of remarkable consequences are found inevitable. Among others, that it becomes possible to travel about in time."

The Time Traveler chuckled. "You forget that I'm going to prove it experimentally."

"Let's have your experiment," said the Psychologist.

"I think we'd like the argument first," said Filby.

"It's this," said the Time Traveler. "You must follow me carefully. I shall have to controvert one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted. The geometry, for instance, they taught you at school is founded on a misconception."

"Is not that rather a large thing to expect us to begin upon?" said Filby.

"I do not mean to ask you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it. You will soon admit as much as I want from you. You know, of course, that a mathematical line, a line of thickness *nil*, has no real existence. They taught you that? Neither has a mathematical plane. These things are mere abstractions."

"That is all right," said the Psychologist.

"Nor, having only length, breadth, and thickness, can a cube have a real existence."

"There I object," said Filby.

"Of course a solid body may exist. All real things——"

"So most people think. But wait a moment. Can an instantaneous cube exist?"

"Don't follow you," said Filby.

"Can a cube that does not last for any time at all, have a real existence?"

Filby became pensive.

"Clearly," the Philosophical Inventor proceeded, "any real body must have extension in *four* directions: it must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, and — Duration. But through a natural infirmity of the flesh, which I will explain to you in a moment, we incline to overlook the fact. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens that our consciousness moves

intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives."

"That," said a Very Young Man, making spasmodic efforts to relight his cigar over the lamp: "that—very clear indeed."

"Now, it is very remarkable that this is so extensively overlooked," continued the Philosophical Inventor, with a slight accession of cheerfulness. "Really this is what is meant by the Fourth Dimension, though some people who talk about the Fourth Dimension do not know they mean it. It is only another way of looking at Time. *There is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except that our consciousness moves along it.* But some foolish people have got hold of the wrong side of that idea. You have all heard what they have to say about this Fourth Dimension?"

"I have not," said the Provincial Mayor.

"It is simply this, That space, as our mathematicians have it, is spoken of as having three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always definable by reference to these planes, each at right angle to the others. But some philosophical people have been asking why *three* dimensions particularly —why not another direction at right angles to the other three?—and have even tried to construct a Four-Dimensional geometry. Professor Simon Newcomb was expounding this to the New York Mathematical Society only a month or so ago. You know how on a flat surface, which has only two dimensions, we can represent a figure of a Three-Dimensional solid, and similarly they think that by models of three dimensions they could represent one of four—if they could master the perspective of the thing. See?"

"I think so," murmured the Provincial Mayor; and, knitting his

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brows, he lapsed into an introspective state, his lips moving as one who repeats mystic words. "Yes, I think I see it now," he said after some time, brightening in a quite transitory manner.

"Well, I do not mind telling you I have been at work upon this geometry of Four Dimensions for some time. Some of my results are curious: for instance, here is a portrait of a man at eight years old, another at fifteen, another at seventeen, another at twenty-three, and so on. All these are evidently sections, as it were, Three-Dimensional representations of his Four-Dimensional being, which is a fixed and unalterable thing.

"Scientific people," proceeded the Philosopher, after the pause required for the proper assimilation of this, "know very well that Time is only a kind of Space. Here is a popular scientific diagram, a weather record. This line I trace with my finger shows

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the movement of the barometer. Yesterday it was so high, yesterday night it fell, then this morning it rose again, and so gently upward to here. Surely the mercury did not trace this line in any of the dimensions of space generally recognized? But certainly it traced such a line, and that line, therefore, we must conclude, was along the Time Dimension."

"But," said the Medical Man, staring hard at a coal in the fire, "if Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space, why is it, and why has it always been, regarded as something different? And why cannot we move about in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?"

The Philosophical Person smiled. "Are you so sure we can move freely in Space? Right and left we can go, backward and forward freely enough, and men always have done so. I admit we move freely in two dimensions. But now about up and down? Gravitation limits us there."

"Not exactly," said the Medical Man. "There are balloons."

"But before the balloons, save for spasmodic jumping and the inequalities of the surface, man had no freedom of vertical movement."

"Still they could move a little up and down," said the Medical Man.

"Easier, far easier, down than up."

"And you cannot move at all in Time. You cannot get away from the present moment."

"My dear sir, that is just where you are wrong. That is just where the whole world has gone wrong. We are always getting away from the present moment. Our mental existences, which are immaterial and have no dimensions, are passing along the Time Dimension with a uniform velocity from the cradle to the grave. Just as we should travel *down* if we began our existence fifty miles above the earth's surface."

"But the great difficulty is this,"

interrupted the Psychologist: "You *can* move about in all directions of Space, but you cannot move about in Time."

"That is the germ of my great discovery. But you are wrong to say that we cannot move about in Time. For instance, if I am recalling an incident very vividly I go back to the instant of its occurrence; I become absent-minded, as you say. I jump back for a moment. Of course we have no means of staying back for any length of time any more than a savage or an animal has of staying six feet above the ground. But a civilized man is better off than the savage in this respect. He can go up against gravitation in a balloon, and why should we not hope that ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time Dimension; or even to turn about and travel the other way?"

"Oh, *this*," began Filby, "is all——"

"Why not?" said the Philosophical Inventor.

"It's against reason," said Filby.

"What reason?" said the Philosophical Inventor.

"You can show black is white by argument," said Filby, "but you will never convince me."

"Possibly not," said the Philosophical Inventor. "But now you begin to see the object of my investigations into the geometry of Four Dimensions. Long ago I had a vague inkling of a machine——"

"To travel through Time!" said the Very Young Man.

"That shall travel indifferently in any direction of Space and Time, as the driver determines."

Filby contented himself with laughter.

"It would be remarkably convenient," the Psychologist suggested. "One might travel back and witness the battle of Hastings."

"Don't you think you would at-

tract attention?" said the Medical Man. "Our ancestors had no great tolerance for anachronisms."

"One might get one's Greek from the very lips of Homer and Plato," the Very Young Man thought.

"In which case they would certainly plow you for the little-go. The German scholars have improved Greek so much."

"Then, there is the future," said the Very Young Man. "Just think! One might invest all one's money, leave it to accumulate at interest, and hurry on ahead."

"To discover a society," said I, "erected on a strictly communistic basis."

"Of all the wild extravagant theories——" began the Psychologist.

"Yes, so it seemed to me, and so I never talked of it until——"

"Experimental verification!" cried I. "You are going to verify *that!*"

"The experiment!" cried Filby, who was getting brain-weary.

"Let's see your experiment, anyhow," said the Psychologist, "though it's all humbug, you know."

The Time Traveler smiled round at us. Then, still smiling faintly, and with his hands deep in his trousers pockets, he walked slowly out of the room, and we heard his slippers shuffling down the long passage to his laboratory.

The Psychologist looked at us. "I wonder what he's got?"

"Some sleight-of-hand trick or other," said the Medical Man, and Filby tried to tell us about a conjuror he had seen at Burslem, but before he had finished his preface the Time Traveler came back, and Filby's anecdote collapsed.

The thing the Time Traveler held in his hand was a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a small clock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance. And now I must be explicit, for

this that follows—unless his explanation is to be accepted—is an absolutely unaccountable thing. He took one of the small octagonal tables that were scattered about the room, and set it in front of the fire, with two legs on the hearthrug. On this table he placed the mechanism. Then he drew up a chair and sat down. The only other object on the table was a small shaded lamp, the bright light of which fell full upon the model. There were also perhaps a dozen candles about, two in brass candlesticks upon the mantel and several in sconces, so that the room was brilliantly illuminated. I sat in a low armchair nearest the fire, and I drew this forward so as to be almost between the Time Traveler and the fireplace. Filby sat behind him, looking over his shoulder. The Medical Man and the Rector watched him in profile from the right, the Psychologist from the left. We were all on the alert. It ap-

pears incredible to me that any kind of trick, however subtly conceived and however adroitly done, could have been played upon us under these conditions.

The Time Traveler looked at us and then at the mechanism.

"Well?" said the Psychologist.

"This little affair," said the Time Traveler, resting his elbows upon the table and pressing his hands together above the apparatus, "is only a model. It is my plan for a machine to travel through Time. You will notice that it looks singularly askew, and that there is an odd twinkling appearance about this bar, as though it was in some way unreal." He pointed to the part with his finger. "Also, here is one little white lever, and here is another."

The Medical Man got up out of his chair and peered into the thing. "It's beautifully made," he said.

"It took two years to make," retorted the Time Traveler. Then,

when we had all done as the Medical Man, he said: "Now I want you clearly to understand that this lever, being pressed over, sends the machine gliding into the future, and this other reverses the motion. This saddle represents the seat of a time traveler. Presently I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into future time, and disappear. Have a good look at the thing. Look at the table too, and satisfy yourselves there is no trickery. I don't want to waste this model, and then be told I'm a quack."

There was a minute's pause perhaps. The Psychologist seemed about to speak to me, but changed his mind. Then the Time Traveler put forth his finger toward the lever. "No," he said suddenly; "lend me your hand." And turning to the Psychologist, he took that individual's hand in his own and told him to put out his forefinger. So that it was

the Psychologist himself who sent forth the model Time Machine on its interminable voyage. We all saw the lever turn. I am absolutely certain there was no trickery. There was a breath of wind, and the lamp flame jumped. One of the candles on the mantel was blown out, and the little machine suddenly swung round, became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps, as an eddy of faintly glittering brass and ivory; and it was gone—vanished! Save for the lamp the table was bare.

Everyone was silent for a minute. Then Filby said he was d——d.

The Psychologist recovered from his stupor, and suddenly looked under the table. At that the Time Traveler laughed cheerfully. "Well?" he said, with a reminiscence of the Psychologist. Then, getting up, he went to the tobacco jar on the mantel, and with his back to us began to fill his pipe.

We stared at each other.

"Look here," said the Medical Man, "are you in earnest about this? Do you seriously believe that that machine has traveled into Time?"

"Certainly," said the Time Traveler, stooping to light a spill at the fire. Then he turned, lighting his pipe, to look at the Psychologist's face. (The Psychologist, to show that he was not unhinged, helped himself to a cigar and tried to light it uncut.) "What is more, I have a big machine nearly finished in there," —he indicated the laboratory,—"and when that is put together I mean to have a journey on my own account."

"You mean to say that that machine has traveled into the future?" said Filby.

"Into the future or the past—I don't, for certain, know which."

After an interval the Psychologist had an inspiration.

"It must have gone into the past if it has gone anywhere," he said.

"Why?" said the Time Traveler.

"Because I presume that it has not moved in space, and if it traveled into the future it would still be here all this time, since it must have traveled through this time."

"But," said I, "if it traveled into the past it would have been visible when we came first into this room; and last Thursday when we were here; and the Thursday before that; and so forth!"

"Serious objections," remarked the Rector with an air of impartiality, turning toward the Time Traveler.

"Not a bit," said the Time Traveler, and, to the Psychologist: "You think. *You* can explain that. It's presentation below the threshold, you know, diluted presentation."

"Of course," said the Psychologist, and reassured us. "That's a simple point in psychology. I should have thought of it. It's plain enough, and helps the paradox delightfully. We cannot see it, nor can we appreciate this machine, any more than we can

the spoke of a wheel spinning, or a bullet flying through the air. If it is traveling through time fifty times or a hundred times faster than we are, if it gets through a minute while we get through a second, the impression it creates will of course be only one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of what it would make if it were not traveling in time. That's plain enough." He passed his hand through the space in which the machine had been. "You see?" he said laughing.

We sat and stared at the vacant table for a minute or so. Then the Time Traveler asked us what we thought of it all.

"It sounds plausible enough to-night," said the Medical Man; "but wait until to-morrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning."

"Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?" asked the Time Traveler. And therewith, taking the lamp in his hand, he led the way down the long, draughty corridor to

his laboratory. I remember vividly the flickering light, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we all followed him, puzzled but incredulous, and how there in the laboratory we beheld a larger edition of the little mechanism which we had seen vanish from before our eyes. Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was generally complete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside some sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be.

"Look here," said the Medical Man, "are you perfectly serious? Or is this a trick—like that ghost you showed us last Christmas?"

"Upon that machine," said the Time Traveler, holding the lamp aloft, "I intend to explore Time. Is that plain? I was never more serious in my life."

CHAPTER II.

The Time Traveler Returns.

THINK that at that time none of us quite believed in the Time Machine. The fact is, the Time Traveler was one of those men who are too clever to be believed; you never felt that you saw all round him; you always suspected some subtle reserve, some ingenuity in ambush, behind his lucid frankness. Had Filby shown the model and explained the matter in the Time Traveler's words, we should have shown *him* far less skepticism. The point is, we should have seen his motives—a pork-butcher could understand Filby. But the Time Traveler had more than a touch of whim among his elements, and we distrusted him. Things that would have made the fame of a clever man seemed tricks

in his hands. It is a mistake to do things too easily. The serious people who took him seriously never felt quite sure of his deportment; they were somehow aware that trusting their reputations for judgment with him was like furnishing a nursery with eggshell china. So I don't think any of us said very much about time traveling in the interval between that Thursday and the next, though its odd potentialities ran, no doubt, in most of our minds: its plausibility, that is, its practical incredibleness, the curious possibilities of anachronism and of utter confusion it suggested. For my own part, I was particularly preoccupied with the trick of the model. That I remember discussing with the Medical Man, whom I met on Friday at the Linnæan. He said he had seen a similar thing at Tübingen, and laid considerable stress on the blowing-out of the candle. But how the trick was done he could not explain.

The next Thursday I went again to Richmond—I suppose I was one of the Time Traveler's most constant guests—and, arriving late, found four or five men already assembled in his drawing room. The Medical Man was standing before the fire with a sheet of paper in one hand and his watch in the other. I looked round for the Time Traveler, and—

"It's half-past seven now," said the Medical Man. "I suppose we'd better have dinner?"

"Where's ——?" said I, naming our host.

"You've just come? It's rather odd. He's unavoidably detained. He asks me in his note to lead off with dinner at seven if he's not back. Says he'll explain when he comes."

"It's seems a pity to let the dinner spoil," said the Editor of a well-known daily paper; and thereupon the Doctor rang the bell.

The Psychologist was the only person besides the Doctor and myself

who had attended the previous dinner. The other men were Blank, the Editor afore-mentioned, a certain journalist, and another—a quiet, shy man with a beard—whom I didn't know, and who, as far as my observation went, never opened his mouth all the evening. There was some speculation at the dinner-table about the Time Traveler's absence, and I suggested time traveling, in a half-jocular spirit. The Editor wanted that explained to him, and the Psychologist volunteered a wooden account of the "ingenious paradox and trick" we had witnessed that day week. He was in the midst of his exposition when the door from the corridor opened slowly and without noise. I was facing the door, and saw it first.

"Hallo!" I said. "At last!"

And the door opened wider, and the Time Traveler stood before us. I gave a cry of surprise.

"Good Heavens, man! what's the

matter?" cried the Medical Man, who saw him next. And the whole tableful turned toward the door.

He was in an amazing plight. His coat was dusty and dirty, and smeared with green down the sleeves; his hair disordered, and as it seemed to me grayer—either with dust and dirt or because its color had actually faded. His face was ghastly pale; his chin had a brown cut on it—a cut half-healed; his expression was haggard and drawn, as by intense suffering. For a moment he hesitated in the doorway, as if he had been dazzled by the light. Then he came into the room. He walked with just such a limp as I have seen in foot-sore tramps. We stared at him in silence, expecting him to speak.

He said not a word, but came painfully to the table, and made a motion toward the wine. The Editor filled a glass of champagne and pushed it toward him. He drained it, and it seemed to do him good; for he looked

round the table, and the ghost of his old smile flickered across his face.

"What on earth have you been up to, man?" said the Doctor.

The Time Traveler did not seem to hear. "Don't let me disturb you," he said, with a certain faltering articulation. "I'm all right." He stopped, held out his glass for more, and took it off at a draught. "That's good," he said. His eyes grew brighter, and a faint color came into his cheeks. His glance flickered over our faces with a certain dull approval, and then went round the warm and comfortable room. Then he spoke again, still as it were feeling his way among his words. "I'm going to wash and dress, and then I'll come down and explain things. Save me some of that mutton. I'm starving for a bit of meat."

He looked across at the Editor, who was a rare visitor, and hoped he was all right. The Editor began a question.

"Tell you presently," said the Time Traveler. "I'm — funny! Be all right in a minute."

He put down his glass, and walked toward the staircase door. Again I remarked his lameness and the soft padding sound of his footfall, and standing up in my place I saw his feet as he went out. He had nothing on them but a pair of tattered, blood-stained socks. Then the door closed upon him. I had half a mind to follow, till I remembered how he detested any fuss about himself. For a minute, perhaps, my mind was wool gathering. Then, "Remarkable Behavior of an Eminent Scientist," I heard the Editor say, thinking (after his wont) in headlines. And this brought my attention back to the bright dinner table.

"What's the game?" said the Journalist. "Has he been doing the Amateur Cadger? I don't follow."

I met the eye of the Psychologist, and read my own interpretation in

his face. I thought of the Time Traveler limping painfully upstairs. I don't think anyone else had noticed his lameness.

The first to recover completely from this surprise was the Medical Man, who rang the bell—the Time Traveler hated to have servants waiting at dinner—for a hot plate. At that the Editor turned to his knife and fork with a grunt, and the Silent Man followed suit. The dinner was resumed. Conversation was exclamatory for a little while, with gaps of wonderment; and then the Editor got fervent in his curiosity.

"Does our friend eke out his modest income with a crossing, or has he his Nebuchadnezzar phases?" he inquired.

"I feel assured it's this business of the Time Machine," I said, and took up the Psychologist's account of our previous meeting.

The new guests were frankly incredulous. The Editor raised objections.

"What *was* this time traveling? A man couldn't cover himself with dust by rolling in a paradox, could he?"

And then, as the idea came home to him, he resorted to caricature. Hadn't they any clothes-brushes in the Future? The Journalist, too, would not believe at any price, and joined the Editor in the easy work of heaping ridicule on the whole thing. They were both the new kind of Journalist—very joyous, irreverent young men. "Our Special Correspondent in the Day After To-Morrow reports," the Journalist was saying—or rather shouting—when the Time Traveler came back. He was dressed in ordinary evening clothes, and nothing save his haggard look remained of the change that had startled me.

"I say," said the Editor hilariously, "these chaps here say you have been traveling into the middle of next week! Tell us all about little Rosebery, will you? What will you take for the lot?"

The Time Traveler came to the place reserved for him without a word. He smiled quietly, in his old way.

"Where's my mutton?" he said. "What a treat it is to stick a fork into meat again!"

"Story!" cried the Editor.

"Story be d——d!" said the Time Traveler. "I want something to eat. I won't say a word until I get some peptone into my arteries. Thanks! And the salt."

"One word," said I. "Have you been time traveling?"

"Yes," said the Time Traveler, with his mouth full, nodding his head.

"I'd give a shilling a line for a verbatim note," said the Editor. The Time Traveler pushed his glass toward the Silent Man and rang it with his finger nail; at which the Silent Man, who had been staring at his face, started convulsively, and poured him wine. The rest of the dinner was uncomfortable. For my

own part, sudden questions kept on rising to my lips, and I dare say it was the same with the others. The Journalist tried to relieve the tension by telling anecdotes of Hettie Potter. The Time Traveler devoted his attention to his dinner, and displayed the appetite of a tramp. The Medical Man smoked a cigarette, and watched the Time Traveler through his eyelashes. The Silent Man seemed even more clumsy than usual, and drank champagne with regularity and determination out of sheer nervousness. At last the Time Traveler pushed his plate away, and looked round us.

"I suppose I must apologize," he said. "I was simply starving. I've had a most amazing time." He reached out his hand for a cigar, and cut the end. "But come into the smoking room. It's too long a story to tell over greasy plates." And ringing the bell in passing, he led the way into the adjoining room.

"You have told Blank and Dash and Chose about the machine?" he said to me, leaning back in his easy-chair and naming the three new guests.

"But the thing's a mere paradox," said the Editor.

"I can't argue to-night. I don't mind telling you the story, but I can't argue. I will," he went on, "tell you the story of what has happened to me, if you like, but you must refrain from interruptions. I want to tell it. Badly. Most of it will sound like lying. So be it! It's true—every word of it, all the same. I was in my laboratory at four o'clock, and since then—— I've lived eight days—such days as no human being ever lived before! I'm nearly worn out, but I shan't sleep till I've told this thing over to you. Then I shall go to bed. But no interruptions! Is it agreed?"

"Agreed!" said the Editor, and the rest of us echoed "Agreed!"

And with that the Time Traveler began his story as I have set it forth. He sat back in his chair at first, and spoke like a weary man. Afterward he got more animated. In writing it down I feel with only too much keenness the inadequacy of pen and ink—and, above all, my own inadequacy—to express its quality. You read, I will suppose, attentively enough; but you cannot see the speaker's white, sincere face in the bright circle of the little lamp, nor hear the intonation of his voice. You cannot know how his expression followed the turns of his story! Most of us hearers were in shadow, for the candles in the smoking room had not been lighted, and only the face of the Journalist and the legs of the Silent Man from the knees downward were illuminated. At first we glanced now and again at each other. After a time we ceased to do that, and looked only at the Time Traveler's face.

CHAPTER III.

The Story Begins.

I TOLD some of you last Thursday of the principles of the Time Machine, and showed you the actual thing itself, incomplete, in the workshop. There it is now, a little travel-worn, truly; and one of the ivory bars is cracked, and a brass rail bent; but the rest of it is sound enough. I expected to finish it on Friday; but on Friday, when the putting together was nearly done, I found that one of the nickel bars was exactly one inch too short, and this I had to get re-made; so that the thing was not complete until this morning. It was at ten o'clock to-day that the first of all Time Machines began its career. I gave it a last tap, tried all the screws again,

put one more drop of oil on the quartz rod, and sat myself in the saddle. I suppose a suicide who holds a pistol to his skull feels much the same wonder at what will come next as I felt then. I took the starting lever in one hand and the stopping one in the other, pressed the first, and almost immediately the second. I seemed to reel; I felt a nightmare sensation of falling; and, looking round, I saw the laboratory exactly as before. Had anything happened? For a moment I suspected that my intellect had tricked me. Then I noted the clock. A moment before, as it seemed, it had stood at a minute or so past ten; now it was nearly half-past three!

"I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both my hands, and went off with a thud. The laboratory got hazy and went dark. Mrs. Watchett came in, and walked, apparently without seeing me, toward the garden door. I sup-

pose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came like the turning out of a lamp, and in another moment came to-morrow. The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter. To-morrow night came black, then day again, night again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur filled my ears and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my mind.

"I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time-traveling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback—of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, day followed night, like the flap, flap, flap of some rotating body. The dim suggestion of the laboratory

seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed, and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then in the intermittent darkness, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous grayness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous color like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch in space, the

moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.

"The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hillside upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me gray and dim. I saw trees growing and changing like puffs of vapor, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, fluctuated, and passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faint and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changing—melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hands upon the dials that registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that, consequently, my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world and vanished, and was fol-

lowed by the bright, brief green of spring.

"The unpleasant sensations of the start were less poignant now. They merged at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration. I remarked, indeed, a clumsy swaying of the machine, for which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused to attend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me I flung myself into futurity. At first I scarce thought of stopping, scarce thought of anything but these new sensations. But presently a fresh series of impressions grew up in my mind,—a certain curiosity, and therewith a certain dread,—until they at last took complete possession of me. What strange developments of humanity, what wonderful advances upon our rudimentary civilization, I thought, might not appear when I came to look nearly into the dim, elusive world that raced and fluctuated before my eyes! I saw great

and splendid architectures rising about me, more massive than any buildings of our own time, and yet, as it seemed, built of glimmer and mist. I saw a richer green flow up the hillside, and remain there without any wintry intermission. Even through the veil of my confusion the earth seemed very fair. And so my mind came round to the business of stopping.

"The peculiar risk lay in the possibility of my finding some substance in the space which I, or the machine, occupied. So long as I traveled at a high velocity through time, this scarcely mattered: I was, so to speak, attenuated—was slipping like a vapor through the interstices of intervening substances! But to come to a stop involved the jamming of myself, molecule by molecule, into whatever lay in my way, meant bringing my atoms into such intimate contact with those of the obstacle that a profound chemical

reaction—possibly a far-reaching explosion—would result, and blow myself and my apparatus out of the Rigid Universe—out of all possible dimensions—into the Unknown. This possibility had occurred to me again and again while I was making the machine; but then I had cheerfully accepted it as an unavoidable risk—one of the risks a man has got to take! Now the risk was inevitable, I no longer saw it in the same cheerful light. The fact is that, insensibly, the absolute strangeness of everything, the sickly jarring and swaying of the machine, above all the feeling of prolonged falling, had absolutely upset my nerve. I told myself that I could never stop, and with a gust of petulance I resolved to stop forthwith. Like an impatient fool, I lugged over the lever, and incontinently the thing went reeling over, and I was flung headlong through the air

"There was the sound of a clap

of thunder in my ears. I may have been stunned for a moment. A pitiless hail was hissing round me, and I was sitting on soft turf in front of the overset machine. Everything still seemed gray, but presently I remarked that the confusion in my ears was gone. I looked round me. I was on what seemed to be a little lawn in a garden, surrounded by rhododendron bushes, and I noticed that their mauve and purple blossoms were dropping in a shower under the beating of the hailstones. The rebounding, dancing hail hung in a little cloud over the machine, and drove along the ground like smoke. In a moment I was wet to the skin. 'Fine hospitality,' said I, 'to a man who has traveled innumerable years to see you!'

"Presently I thought what a fool I was to get wet. I stood up and looked round me. A colossal figure, carved apparently in some white stone, loomed indistinctly beyond

the rhododendrons through the hazy downpour. But all else of the world was invisible.

"My sensations would be hard to describe. As the columns of hail grew thinner, I saw the white figure more distinctly. It was very large, for a silver birch tree touched its shoulder. It was of white marble, in shape something like a winged sphinx, but the wings, instead of being carried vertically at the sides, were spread so that it seemed to hover. The pedestal, it appeared to me, was of bronze, and was thick with verdigris. It chanced that the face was toward me; the sightless eyes seemed to watch me; there was the faint shadow of a smile on the lips. It was greatly weatherworn, and that imparted an unpleasant suggestion of disease. I stood looking at it for a little space—half a minute, perhaps, or half an hour. It seemed to advance and to recede as the hail drove before it denser or thinner.

At last I tore my eyes from it for a moment, and saw that the hail curtain had worn threadbare, and that the sky was lightening with the promise of the sun.

"I looked up again at the crouching white shape, and the full temerity of my voyage came suddenly upon me. What might appear when that hazy curtain was altogether withdrawn? What might not have happened to men? What if cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful? I might seem some old-world savage animal, only the more dreadful and disgusting for our common likeness—a foul creature to be incontinently slain.

"Already I saw other vast shapes—huge buildings with intricate parapets and tall columns, with a wooded hillside dimly creeping in upon me

through the lessening storm. I was seized with a panic fear. I turned frantically to the Time Machine, and strove hard to readjust it. As I did so the shafts of the sun smote through the thunderstorm. The gray downpour was swept aside and vanished like the trailing garments of a ghost. Above me, in the intense blue of the summer sky, some faint brown shreds of clouds whirled into nothingness. The great buildings about me stood out clear and distinct, shining with the wet of the thunderstorm, and picked out in white by the unmelted hailstones piled along their courses. I felt naked in a strange world. I felt as perhaps a bird may feel in the clear air, knowing the hawk wings above and will swoop. My fear grew to frenzy. I took a breathing space, set my teeth, and again grappled fiercely, wrist and knee, with the machine. It gave under my desperate onset and turned over. It struck my chin violently. One hand

on the saddle, the other on the lever, I stood panting heavily in attitude to mount again.

"But with this recovery of a prompt retreat my courage recovered. I looked more curiously and less fearfully at this world of the remote future. In a circular opening, high up in the wall of the nearer house, I saw a group of figures clad in rich soft robes. They had seen me, and their faces were directed toward me.

"Then I heard voices approaching me. Coming through the bushes by the white sphinx were the heads and shoulders of men running. One of these emerged in a pathway leading straight to the little lawn upon which I stood with my machine. He was a slight creature—perhaps four feet high—clad in a purple tunic, girdled at the waist with a leather belt. Sandals or buskins—I could not clearly distinguish which—where on his feet; his legs were bare to the knees, and his head was bare. Noticing that, I

noticed for the first time how warm the air was.

"He struck me as being a very beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribably frail. His flushed face reminded me of the more beautiful kind of consumptive—that hectic beauty of which we used to hear so much. At the sight of him I suddenly regained confidence. I took my hands from the machine.

CHAPTER IV.

The Golden Age.

N another moment we were standing face to face, I and this fragile thing out of futurity. He came straight up to me and laughed into my eyes. The absence of any sign of fear from his bearing struck me at once. Then he turned to the two others who were following him and spoke to them in a strange and very sweet and liquid tongue.

"There were others coming, and presently a little group of perhaps eight or ten of these exquisite creatures were about me. One of them addressed me. It came into my head, oddly enough, that my voice was too harsh and deep for them. So I shook my head, and pointing to my

ears, shook it again. He came a step forward, hesitated, and then touched my hand. Then I felt other soft little tentacles upon my back and shoulders. They wanted to make sure I was real. There was nothing in this at all alarming. Indeed, there was something in these pretty little people that inspired confidence—a graceful gentleness, a certain childlike ease. And besides, they looked so frail that I could fancy myself flinging the whole dozen of them about like ninepins. But I made a sudden motion to warn them when I saw their little pink hands feeling at the Time Machine. Happily then, when it was not too late, I thought of a danger I had hitherto forgotten, and reaching over the bars of the machine I unscrewed the little levers that would set it in motion, and put these in my pocket. Then I turned again to see what I could do in the way of communication.

"And then, looking more nearly

into their features, I saw some further peculiarities in their Dresden china type of prettiness. Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharp end at the neck and cheek; there was not the faintest suggestion of it on the face, and their ears were singularly minute. The mouths were small, with bright red, rather thin lips, and the little chins ran to a point. The eyes were large and mild; and—this may seem egotism on my part—I fancied even then that there was a certain lack of the interest I might have expected in them.

"As they made no effort to communicate with me, but simply stood round me smiling and speaking in soft cooing notes to each other, I began the conversation. I pointed to the Time Machine and to myself. Then, hesitating for a moment how to express Time, I pointed to the sun. At once a quaintly pretty little figure in checkered purple and white, followed my gesture, and then aston-

ished me by imitating the sound of thunder.

"For the moment I was staggered, though the import of his gesture was plain enough. The question had come into my mind abruptly: Were these creatures fools? You may hardly understand how it took me. You see I had always anticipated that the people of the year Eight Hundred Thousand odd would be incredibly in front of us in knowledge, art, everything. Then one of them suddenly asked me a question that showed him to be on the intellectual level of one of our five-year-old children—asked me, in fact, if I had come from the sun in a thunderstorm! It let loose the judgment I had suspended upon their clothes, their frail, light limbs, and fragile features. A flow of disappointment rushed across my mind. For a moment I felt that I had built the Time Machine in vain.

"I nodded, pointed to the sun,

and gave them such a vivid rendering of a thunderclap as startled them. They all withdrew a pace or so and bowed. Then came one laughing toward me, carrying a chain of beautiful flowers, altogether new to me, and put it about my neck. The idea was received with melodious applause; and presently they were all running to and fro for flowers, and laughingly flinging them upon me until I was almost smothered with blossom. You who have never seen the like can scarcely imagine what delicate and wonderful flowers countless years of culture had created. Then someone suggested that their plaything should be exhibited in the nearest building, and so I was led past the sphinx of white marble, which had seemed to watch me all the while with a smile at my astonishment, toward a vast gray edifice of fretted stone. As I went with them the memory of my confident anticipations of a profoundly

grave and intellectual posterity came, with irresistible merriment, to my mind.

"The building had a large entry and was altogether of colossal dimensions. I was naturally most occupied with the growing crowd of little people, and with the big open portals that yawned before me shadowy and mysterious. My general impression of the world I saw over their heads was of a tangled waste of beautiful bushes and flowers, a long neglected and yet weedless garden. I saw a number of tall spikes of strange white flowers, measuring a foot perhaps across the spread of the waxen petals. They grew scattered, as if wild, among the variegated shrubs, but, as I say, I did not examine them closely at this time. The Time Machine was left deserted on the turf among the rhododendrons.

"The arch of the doorway was richly carved, but naturally I did not observe the carving very nar-

rowly, though I fancied I saw suggestions of old Phœnician decorations as I passed through, and it struck me that they were very badly broken and weather-worn. Several more brightly clad people met me in the doorway, and so we entered, I, dressed in dingy nineteenth century garments, looking grotesque enough, garlanded with flowers, and surrounded by an eddying mass of bright, soft-colored robes and shining white limbs, in a melodious whirl of laughter and laughing speech.

"The big doorway opened into a proportionately great hall hung with brown. The roof was in shadow, and the windows, partially glazed with colored glass, and partially unglazed, admitted a tempered light. The floor was made up of huge blocks of some very hard white metal, not plates nor slabs—blocks, and it was so much worn, as I judged by the going to and fro of past generations, as to be deeply channeled along the

more frequented ways. Transverse to the length were innumerable tables made of slabs of polished stone, raised, perhaps, a foot from the floor, and upon these were heaps of fruits. Some I recognized as a kind of hypertrophied raspberry and orange, but for the most part they were strange.

"Between the tables were scattered a great number of cushions. Upon these my conductors seated themselves, signing for me to do likewise. With a pretty absence of ceremony they began to eat the fruit with their hands, flinging peel, and stalks, and so forth, into the round openings in the sides of the tables. I was not loth to follow their example, for I felt thirsty and hungry. As I did so I surveyed the hall at my leisure.

"And perhaps the thing that struck me most was its dilapidated look. The stained-glass windows, which displayed only a geometrical pattern, were broken in many places, and the curtains that hung across the

lower end were thick with dust. And it caught my eye that the corner of the marble table near me was fractured. Nevertheless, the general effect was extremely rich and picturesque. There were, perhaps, a couple of hundred people dining in the hall, and most of them, seated as near to me as they could come, were watching me with interest, their little eyes shining over the fruit they were eating. All were clad in the same soft, and yet strong, silky material.

"Fruit, by the bye, was all their diet. These people of the remote future were strict vegetarians, and while I was with them, in spite of some carnal cravings, I had to be frugivorous also. Indeed, I found afterward that horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, had followed the ichthyosaurus into extinction. But the fruits were very delightful; one, in particular, that seemed to be in season all the time I was there,—a floury thing in a three-sided husk,—was especially

good, and I made it my staple. At first I was puzzled by all these strange fruits, and by the strange flowers I saw, but later I began to perceive their import.

"However, I am telling you of my fruit dinner in the distant future now. So soon as my appetite was a little checked, I determined to make a resolute attempt to learn the speech of these new men of mine. Clearly that was the next thing to do. The fruits seemed a convenient thing to begin upon, and holding one of these up I began a series of interrogative sounds and gestures. I had some considerable difficulty in conveying my meaning. At first my efforts met with a stare of surprise or inextinguishable laughter, but presently a fair-haired little creature seemed to grasp my intention and repeated a name. They had to chatter and explain their business at great length to each other, and my first attempts to make their exquisite little sounds

of the language caused an immense amount of genuine, if uncivil amusement. However, I felt like a schoolmaster amid children, and persisted, and presently I had a score of noun substantives at least, at my command; and then I got to demonstrative pronouns, and even the verb 'to eat.' But it was slow work, and the little people soon tired and wanted to get away from my interrogations, so I determined, rather of necessity, to let them give their lessons in little doses when they felt inclined. And very little doses I found they were before long, for I never met people more indolent or more easily fatigued.

CHAPTER V.

Sunset.

A QUEER thing I soon discovered about my little hosts, and that was their lack of interest. They would come to me with eager cries of astonishment, like children, but, like children, they would soon stop examining me, and wander away after some other toy. The dinner and my conversational beginnings ended, I noted for the first time that almost all those who had surrounded me at first were gone. It is odd, too, how speedily I came to disregard these little people. I went out through the portal into the sunlit world again as soon as my hunger was satisfied. I was continually meeting more of these men of the future, who would follow

me a little distance, chatter and laugh about me, and, having smiled and gesticulated in a friendly way, leave me again to my own devises.

"The calm of evening was upon the world as I emerged from the great hall, and the scene was lit by the warm glow of the setting sun. At [illegible] things were very confusing. Ev[illegible] thing was so entirely different fro[illegible] the world I had known—ev[illegible] flowers. The big building I h[illegible] was situated on the slope of a [illegible]oad river valley, but the Thame[illegible] had shifted, perhaps a mile fro[illegible] present position. I resolved [illegible] mount to the summit of a crest, p[illegible]s-sibly a mile and a half away, from which I could get a wider view of this our planet in the year 802,701, A. D. For that, I should explain, was the date the little dials of my machine recorded.

"As I walked I was watchful of every impression that could possibly help to explain the condition of

ruinous splendor in which I found the world—for ruinous it was. A little way up the hill, for instance, was a great heap of granite, bound together by masses of aluminum, a vast labyrinth of precipitous walls and crumbled heaps, amid which were thick heaps of very beautiful pagoda-like plants—nettles possibly, but wonderfully tinted with brown about the leaves, and incapable of stinging. It was evidently the derelict remains of some vast structure, built to what end I could not determine. It was here that I was destined, at a later date, to have a very strange experience—the first intimation of a still stranger discovery—but of that I will speak in its proper place.

"Looking round, with a sudden thought, from a terrace on which I had rested for a while, I realized that there were no small houses to be seen. Apparently the single house, and possibly even the household, had

vanished. Here and there among the greenery were palace-like buildings, but the house and the cottage, which form such characteristic features of our own English landscape, had disappeared.

"'Communism,' said I to myself.

"And on the heels of that came another thought. I looked at the half dozen little figures that were following me. Then, in a flash, I perceived that all had the same form of costume, the same soft hairless visage, and the same girlish rotundity of limb. It may seem strange, perhaps, that I had not noticed this before. But everything was so strange. Now, I saw the fact plainly enough. In costume, and in all the differences of texture and bearing that now mark off the sex from each other, these people of the future were alike. And the children seemed to my eyes to be but the miniatures of their parents. I judged then that children of that time were extremely

precocious, physically at least, and I found afterward abundant verification of my opinion.

"Seeing the ease and security in which these people were living, I felt that this close resemblance of the sexes was, after all, what one would expect; for the strength of a man and the softness of a woman, the institution of the family, and the differentiation of occupations are mere militant necessities of an age of physical force. Where population is balanced and abundant, much child-bearing becomes an evil rather than a blessing to the State; where violence comes but rarely and offspring are secure, there is less necessity—indeed there is no necessity—of an efficient family, and the specialization of the sexes with reference to their children's needs disappears. We see some beginnings of this even in our own time, and in this future age it was complete. This, I must remind you, was my speculation at the time.

Later, I was to appreciate how far it fell short of the reality.

"While I was musing upon these things, my attention was attracted by a pretty little structure, like a well under a cupola. I thought in a transitory way of the oddness of wells still existing, and then resumed the thread of my speculations. There were no large buildings toward the top of the hill, and as my walking powers were evidently miraculous, I was presently left alone for the first time. With a strange sense of freedom and adventure I pushed up to the crest.

"There I found a seat of some yellow metal that I did not recognize, corroded in places with a kind of pinkish rust and half smothered in soft moss, the arm rests cast and filed into the resemblance of griffins' heads. I sat down on it, and I surveyed the broad view of our old world under the sunset of that long day. It was as sweet and fair a view

as I have ever seen. The sun had already gone below the horizon and the west was flaming gold, touched with some horizontal bars of purple and crimson. Below was the valley of the Thames, in which the river lay like a band of burnished steel. I have ready spoken of the great palaces dotted about among the variegated greenery, some in ruins and some still occupied. Here and there rose a white or silvery figure in the waste garden of the earth, here and there came the sharp vertical line of some cupola or obelisk. There were no hedges, no signs of proprietary rights, no evidences of agriculture; the whole earth had become a garden.

"So watching, I began to put my interpretation upon the things I had seen, and as it shaped itself to me that evening, my interpretation was something in this way (afterward I found I had got only a half truth, or only a glimpse of one facet of the truth):

"It seemed to me that I had happened upon humanity upon the wane. The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of mankind. For the first time I began to realize an odd consequence of the social effort in which we are at present engaged. And yet, come to think, it is a logical consequence enough. Strength is the outcome of need; security sets a premium on feebleness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of life—the true civilizing process that makes life more and more secure—had gone steadily on to a climax. One triumph of a united humanity over Nature had followed another. Things that are now mere dreams had become projects deliberately put in hand and carried forward. And the harvest was what I saw!

"After all, the sanitation and the agriculture of to-day are still in the rudimentary stage. The science of our time has attacked but a little department of the field of human dis-

ease, but, even so, it spreads its operations very steadily and persistently. Our agriculture and horticulture destroy just here and there a weed and cultivate perhaps a score or so of wholesome plants, leaving the greater number to fight out a balance as they can. We improve our favorite plants and animals—and how few they are—gradually by selective breeding; now a new and better peach, now a seedless grape, now a sweeter and larger flower, now a more convenient breed of cattle. We improve them gradually, because our ideals are vague and tentative, and our knowledge is very limited; because Nature, too, is shy and slow in our clumsy hands. Some day all this will be better organized, and still better. That is the drift of the current in spite of the eddies. The whole world will be intelligent, educated, and co-operating; things will move faster and faster toward the subjugation of Nature. In the end,

wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs.

"This adjustment, I say, must have been done, and done well: done indeed for all time, in the space of Time across which my machine had leaped. The air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither. The ideal of preventive medicine was attained. Diseases had been stamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my stay. And I shall have to tell you later that even the processes of putrefaction and decay had been profoundly affected by these changes.

"Social triumphs, too, had been effected. I saw mankind housed in splendid shelters, gloriously clothed, and as yet I had found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economi-

cal struggle. The shop, the advertisement, traffic, all that commerce which constitutes the body of our world, was gone. It was natural on that golden evening that I should jump at the idea of a social paradise.

"The difficulty of increasing population had been met, I guessed, and population had ceased to increase.

"But with this change in condition comes inevitably adaptations to the change. What, unless biological science is a mass of errors, is the cause of human intelligence and vigor? Hardship and freedom: conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall; conditions that put a premium upon the loyal alliance of capable men, upon self-restraint, patience, and decision. And the institution of the family, and the emotions that arise therein, the fierce jealousy, the tenderness for offspring, parental self-devotion, all found their justification and support in the immi-

nent dangers of the young. *Now*, where are those imminent dangers? There is a sentiment arising, and it will grow, against connubial jealousy, against fierce maternity, against passion of all sorts; unnecessary things now, and things that make us uncomfortable, savage survivals, discords in a refined and pleasant life.

"I thought of the physical slightness of the people, their lack of intelligence, and those big abundant ruins, and it strengthened my belief in a perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet. Humanity had been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and had used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lived. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions.

"Under the new conditions of perfect comfort and security, that restless energy, that with us is strength, would become weakness. Even in our own time certain tendencies and

desires, once necessary to survival, are a constant source of failure. Physical courage and the love of battle, for instance, are no great help —may even be hindrances—to a civilized man. And in a state of physical balance and security, power, intellectual as well as physical, would be out of place. For countless years I judged there had been no danger of war or solitary violence, no danger from wild beasts, no wasting disease to require strength of constitution, no need of toil. For such a life, what we should call the weak are as well equipped as the strong, are, indeed, no longer weak. Better equipped indeed they are, for the strong would be fretted by an energy for which there was no outlet. No doubt the exquisite beauty of the buildings I saw was the outcome of the last surgings of the now purposeless energy of mankind before it settled down into perfect harmony with the conditions under which it

lived—the flourish of that triumph which began the last great peace. This has ever been the fate of energy in security; it takes to art and to eroticism, and then come languor and decay.

"Even this artistic impetus would at last die away—had almost died in the Time I saw. To adorn themselves with flowers, to dance, to sing in the sunlight; so much was left of the artistic spirit, and no more. Even that would fade in the end into a contented inactivity. We are kept keen on the grindstone of pain and necessity, and it seemed to me that here was that hateful grindstone broken at last!

"As I stood there in the gathering dark I thought that in this simple explanation I had mastered the problem of the world—mastered the whole secret of these delicious people. Possibly the checks they had devised for the increase of population had succeeded too well, and their num-

bers had rather diminished than kept stationary. That would account for the abandoned ruins. Very simple was my explanation, and plausible enough—as most wrong theories are.

"As I stood there musing over this too perfect triumph of man, the full moon, yellow and gibbous, came up out of an overflow of silver light in the northeast. The bright little figure ceased to move about below, a noiseless owl flitted by, and I shivered with the chill of the night. I determined to descend and find where I could sleep.

"I looked for the building I knew. Then my eye traveled along to the figure of the white sphinx upon the pedestal of bronze, growing distinct as the light of the rising moon grew brighter. I could see the silver birch against it. There was the tangle of rhododendron bushes, black in the pale light, and there was the little lawn. I looked at the lawn again. A queer doubt chilled my com-

placency. 'No,' said I stoutly to myself, 'that was not the lawn.'

"But it *was* the lawn. For the white leprous face of the sphinx was toward it. Can you imagine what I felt as this conviction came home to me? But you cannot. The Time Machine was gone!

"At once, like a lash across the face, came the possibility of losing my own age, of being left helpless in this strange new world. The bare thought of it was an actual physical sensation. I could feel it grip me at the throat and stop my breathing.

CHAPTER VI.

The Machine is Lost.

IN another moment I was in a passion of fear, and running with great, leaping strides down the slope. Once I fell headlong and cut my face. I lost no time in stanching the blood, but jumped up and ran on, with a warm trickle down my cheek and chin. All the time I ran I was saying to myself: 'They have moved it a little—pushed it under the bushes out of the way.' Nevertheless, I ran with all my might. All the time, with the certainty that sometimes comes with excessive dread, I knew that such assurance was folly, knew instinctively that the machine was removed out of my reach.

"My breath came with pain. I

suppose I covered the whole distance, from the hill crest to the little lawn, two miles perhaps, in ten minutes. And I am not a young man. I cursed aloud as I ran at my confident folly in leaving the machine, wasting good breath thereby. I cried aloud, and none answered. Not a creature seemed to be stirring in that moonlit world.

"When I reached the lawn my worst fears were realized. Not a trace of the thing was to be seen. I felt faint and cold when I faced the empty space among the black tangle of bushes. I ran round it furiously, as if the thing might be hidden in a corner, and then stopped abruptly with my hands clutching my hair. Above me towered the sphinx upon the bronze pedestal, white, shining, leprous in the light of the rising moon. It seemed to smile in mockery of my dismay.

"I might have consoled myself by imagining the little people had put

the mechanism in some shelter for me, had not I felt assured of their physical and intellectual inadequacy. That is what dismayed me: the sense of some hitherto unsuspected power through whose intervention my invention had vanished. Yet of one thing I felt assured: unless some other age had produced its exact duplicate, the machine could not have moved in Time. The attachment of the levers—I will show you the method later—prevented anyone from tampering with it in that way when they were removed. It had been moved, and was hid, only in Space. But, then, where could it be?

"I think I must have had a kind of frenzy. I remember running violently in and out among the moonlit bushes all round the sphinx, and startling some white animal that in the dim light I took for a small deer. I remember, too, late that night, beating the bushes with my clenched fists until my knuckles were gashed

and bleeding from the broken twigs.

"Then, sobbing and raving in my anguish of mind, I went down to the great building of stone. The big hall was dark, silent, and deserted. I slipped on the uneven floor and fell over one of the malachite tables, almost breaking my shin. I lit a match and went on past the dusty curtains of which I have told you.

"There I found a second great hall covered with cushions, upon which perhaps a score or so of the little people were sleeping. I have no doubt they found my second appearance strange enough, coming suddenly out of the quiet darkness with inarticulate noises and the splutter and flare of a match. For they had forgotten about matches. 'Where is my Time Machine?' I began, bawling like an angry child, laying hands upon them and shaking them up together. It must have been very queer to them. Some laughed, most of them looked

sorely frightened. When I saw them standing round me, it came into my head that I was doing as foolish a thing as it was possible for me to do under the circumstances, in trying to revive the sensation of fear. For reasoning from the daylight behavior I thought that fear must be forgotten.

"Abruptly I dashed down the match, and knocking one of the people over in my course, went blundering across the big dining hall again out under the moonlight. I heard cries of terror and their little feet running and stumbling this way and that. I do not remember all I did as the moon crept up the sky. I suppose it was the unexpected nature of my loss that maddened me. I felt hopelessly cut off from my own kind, a strange animal in an unknown world. I must have raved to and fro, screaming and crying upon God and Fate. I have a memory of horrible fatigue, as the long night of

despair wore away, of looking in this impossible place and that, of groping among moonlit ruins and touching strange creatures in the black shadows; at last, of lying on the ground near the sphinx and weeping with absolute wretchedness, even anger at the folly of leaving the machine having leaked away with my strength. I had nothing left but misery.

"Then I slept, and when I woke again it was full day, and a couple of sparrows were hopping around me upon the turf within reach of my arm.

"I sat up in the freshness of the morning trying to remember how I had got there, and why I had such a profound sense of desertion and despair. Then things came clear in my mind. With the plain, reasonable daylight I could look my circumstances fairly in the face. I saw the wild folly of my frenzy overnight, and I could reason with myself.

"'Suppose the worst,' said I, 'suppose the machine altogether lost—perhaps destroyed. It behooves me to be calm and patient, to learn the way of the people, to get a clear idea of the method of my loss and the means of getting materials and tools; so that in the end, perhaps, I may make another. That would be my only hope, a poor hope, perhaps, but better than despair. And, after all, it was a beautiful and curious world.

"'But probably the machine had only been taken away. Still, I must be calm and patient, find its hiding place, and recover it by force or cunning.' And with that I scrambled to my feet and looked about me, wondering where I could bathe. I felt weary, stiff, and travel-soiled. The freshness of the morning made me desire an equal freshness. I had exhausted my emotion. Indeed, as I went about my business, I found myself wondering at my intense excitement overnight.

"That morning I made a careful examination of the ground about the little lawn. I wasted some time in futile questionings conveyed as well as I was able to such of the little people as came by. They all failed to understand my gestures—some were simply stolid; some thought it was a jest, and laughed at me. I had the hardest task in the world to keep my hands off their pretty, laughing faces. It was a foolish impulse, but the devil begotten of fear and blind anger was ill curbed, and still eager to take advantage of my perplexity. The turf gave better counsel. I found a groove ripped in it, about midway between the pedestal of the sphinx and the marks of my feet where, on arrival, I had struggled with the overturned machine. There were other signs of the removal of a heavy body about, of queer, narrow footprints like those I could imagine made by a sloth. This directed my closer attention to the pedestal. It

was, as I think I have said, of bronze. It was not a mere block, but highly decorated with deep-framed panels on either side. I went and rapped at these. The pedestal was hollow. Examining the panels with care, I found them discontinuous with the frames. There were no handles nor keyholes, but possibly the panels, if they were doors, as I supposed, opened from within. One thing was clear enough to my mind. It took no very great mental effort to infer that my Time Machine was inside that pedestal. But how it got there was a different problem.

"I saw the heads of two orange-clad people coming through the bushes and under some blossom-covered apple trees toward me. I turned, smiling, to them, and beckoned them to me. They came, and then, pointing to the bronze pedestal, I tried to intimate my wish to open it. But at my first gesture toward this, they behaved very oddly. I don't know how

to convey their expression to you. Suppose you were to use a grossly improper gesture to a delicate-minded woman—it is how she would look. They went off as if they had received the last possible insult.

"However, I wanted access to the Time Machine; so I tried a sweet-looking little chap in white next, with exactly the same result. Somehow, his manner made me ashamed of myself. But, as I say, I wanted the Time Machine. I tried one more. As he turned off like the others, my temper got the better of me. In three strides I was after him, had him by the loose part of his robe round the neck, and began dragging him toward the sphinx. Then I saw the horror and repugnance of his face, and all of a sudden I let him go.

"But I was not beaten yet. I banged with my fist at the bronze panels. I thought I heard something stir inside—to be explicit, I thought I heard a sound like a chuckle—but

I must have been mistaken. Then I got a big pebble from the river, and came and hammered till I had flattened a coil in the decorations, and the verdegris came off in powdery flakes. The delicate little people must have heard me hammering in gusty outbreaks a mile away on either hand, but nothing came of it. I saw a crowd of them upon the slopes, looking furtively at me. At last, hot and tired, I sat down to watch the place. But I was too restless to watch long, and, besides, I am too Occidental for a long vigil. I could work at a problem for years, but to wait inactive for twenty-four hours—that is another matter.

"I got up after a time, and began walking aimlessly through the bushes toward the hill again.

"'Patience,' said I to myself. 'If you want your machine again, you must leave that sphinx alone. If they mean to take your machine away, it's little good your wrecking

their bronze panels, and if they don't, you will get it back so soon as you can ask for it. To sit among all those unknown things before a puzzle like that is hopeless. That way lies monomania. Face this world. Learn its ways; watch it; be careful of too hasty guesses at its meaning. In the end you will find clews to it all.'

"Then suddenly the humor of the situation came into my mind: the thought of the years I had spent in study and toil to get into the future age, and now my passion of anxiety to get out of it. I had made myself the most complicated and the most hopeless trap that ever a man devised. Although it was at my own expense, I could not help myself. I laughed aloud.

"Going through the big palace it seemed to me that the little people avoided me. It may have been my fancy, or it may have had something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze. Yet I felt

tolerably sure of the avoidance. I was careful, however, to show no concern, and to abstain from any pursuit of them, and in the course of a day or two things got back to the old footing.

CHAPTER VII.

The Strange Animal.

I MADE what progress I could in the language, and in addition I pushed my explorations here and there. Either I missed some subtle point or their language was excessively simple, almost exclusively composed of concrete substantives and verbs. There seemed to be few, if any, abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentences were usually simple and of two words, and I failed to convey or understand any but the simplest propositions. I determined to put the thought of my Time Machine, and the mystery of the bronze doors under the sphinx, as much as possible in a corner of my memory until my growing knowledge would

lead me back to them in a natural way. Yet a certain feeling you may understand tethered me in a circle of a few miles round the point of my arrival.

"So far as I could see, all the world displayed the same exuberant richness as the Thames valley. From every hill I climbed I saw the same abundance of splendid buildings, endlessly varied in material and style, the same clustering thickets of evergreens, the same blossom-laden trees and tree ferns. Here and there water shone like silver, and beyond, the land rose into blue undulating hills and so faded into the serenity of the sky.

"A peculiar feature that presently attracted my attention was certain circular wells that appeared to sink to a profound depth. One lay by the path up the hill which I had followed during my first walk. These wells were rimmed with bronze, curiously wrought, and often protected

by small cupolas from the rain. Sitting by the side of these, and peering down, I failed to see any gleam of water, and could catch no reflection from a lighted match. I heard a peculiar dull sound; thud, thud, thud, like the beating of some big engine, and I discovered from the flaring of the match that a steady current of air set down the shaft.

"Moreover, I carelessly threw a scrap of paper into the throat of the well, and instead of fluttering slowly down, it was at once sucked swiftly out of sight. After a time, too, I came to connect with these wells certain tall towers that stood here and there upon the hill slopes. Above these there was often apparent a peculiar flicker of the air, much as one sees it on a hot day above a sun-scorched beach.

"Putting these things together there certainly seemed to me a strong suggestion of an extensive system of subterraneous ventilation, though its

true import was difficult to imagine. I was at first inclined to associate it with the sanitary apparatus of these people. It was the obvious suggestion of these things, but it was absolutely wrong.

"And here I must admit that I learned very little of drains, and bells, and modes of conveyance and the like conveniences during my time in this real future. In some of the fictitious visions of Utopias and coming times I have read, there is a vast amount of detail about building construction and social arrangements and so forth. But while such details are easy enough to obtain when the whole world lies in one's imagination, they are altogether inaccessible to a real traveler amid such realities as surrounded me. Conceive what tale of London a negro from Central Africa would take back to his tribe. What would he know of railway companies, of social movements, of telephone and

telegraph wires, of the parcels delivery company, and postal orders? And yet we at least would be willing enough to explain these things. And even of what he knew, how much could he make his untraveled friend believe? Then think how little is the gap between a negro and a man of our times, and how wide the interval between myself and the Golden Age people. I was sensible of much that was unseen, and which contributed to my comfort, but save for a general impression of automatic organization, I fear I can convey very little of the difference to your minds.

"In the matter of sepulcher, for instance, I could see no traces of crematoria or anything suggestive of tombs. But it occurred to me that possibly cemeteries or crematoria existed at some spot beyond the range of my explorations. This again was a question I deliberately put to myself, and upon which my curiosity was at first entirely de-

feated. Neither were there any old or infirm among them.

"I must confess that my satisfaction with my first theories at an automatic civilization and a decadent humanity did not endure. Yet I could think of none other. Let me put my difficulties. The several big palaces I had explored were mere living places, great dining halls and sleeping apartments. I could find no machinery, no appliances of any kind. Yet these people were clothed in pleasant fabrics that must at times need renewal, their sandals though without ornament were fairly complex specimens of metal work. Somehow such things must be made. And the little people displayed no vestige of the creative tendencies of our time. There were no shops, no workshops, no indications of importations from any other part of the earth. They spent all their time in playing gently, in bathing in the river, in making love in a half play-

ful fashion, in eating fruit, and sleeping. I could not see how things were kept going.

"Then again about the Time Machine. Something, I knew not what, had taken it into the hollow pedestal of the sphinx. Why? For the life of me I could not imagine.

"Then there were those wells without water, those flickering pillars. I felt I missed a clew somewhere. I felt—how shall I say it? Suppose you found an inscription with sentences here and there in excellent plain English, and interpolated therewith others made up of words, even of letters, absolutely unknown to you. That was how the world of 802,701 presented itself to me on the third day of my stay.

"On that day, too, I made a friend —of a sort. It happened that as I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow of the river, one of them was seized with cramp and began drifting down the stream.

The main current of the stream ran rather swiftly there, but not too swiftly for even a moderate swimmer. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange want of ideas of these people, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly, crying little creature who was drowning before their eyes.

"When I realized this I hurriedly slipped off my garments, and wading in from a point lower down, caught the poor little soul and brought her to land.

"A little rubbing of the limbs soon brought her round, and I had the satisfaction of seeing that she was all right before I left her. I had got to such a low estimate of these little folks that I did not expect gratitude. In that, however, I was wrong.

"The incident happened in the morning. In the afternoon I met my little woman, as I believe it was, when I was returning toward my center from one of my explorations,

and she received me with cries of delight and presented me with a big garland of flowers—evidently prepared for me.

"The action took my imagination. Very possibly I had been feeling desolate. At any rate I did my best to display my appreciation of the gift.

"We were soon seated together in a little stone arbor, engaged in a conversation that was chiefly smiles.

"The little creature's friendliness affected me exactly as a child's might. We passed each other flowers and she kissed my hands. I did the same to hers. Then I tried conversation and found out her name was Weena, which, though I don't know what it meant, somehow seemed appropriate enough. That was the beginning of a queer friendship that lasted altogether a week and ended—as I will tell you.

"She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me always. She

tried to follow me everywhere, and it went to my heart to tire her out upon my next exploration and leave her behind at last exhausted, and calling after me rather plaintively. But the problems of the world had to be mastered. I had not, I said to myself, come into the future to carry on a miniature flirtation. Yet her distress when I left her was very great, her expostulations at the parting sometimes frantic, and I think altogether I had as much trouble as comfort from her affection. And yet she was, somehow, a very great comfort.

"I thought it was mere childish affection that made her cling to me. Until it was too late, I did not clearly know what I had inflicted upon her when I left her. Nor, until it was too late, did I clearly understand what she was to me. For the little doll of a creature, by merely seeming fond of me and showing in her weak futile way that she cared

for me, presently gave my return to the neighborhood of the white sphinx, almost the feeling of coming home. I would watch for her little figure of white and gold so soon as I came over the hill.

"It was from her, too, that I learned that fear had not altogether left the world. She was fearless enough in the daylight, and she had the oddest confidence in me—for once in a foolish moment I made threatening grimaces at her, and she simply laughed at them. But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded black things. Darkness to her was the one fearful thing. It was a singularly passionate dread, and it set me thinking and observing. I discovered then, among other things, that these little people gathered into the great houses after dark, and slept a number together. To enter upon them without a light was to put them into a tumult of apprehension. I never found one out of doors or one

sleeping alone within doors after dark.

"Yet I was still such a blockhead that I missed the lesson of that fear, and in spite of Weena's evident distress insisted upon sleeping away from these slumbering heaps of humanity. It troubled her greatly, but usually her odd affection for me triumphed, and for five of the nights of our acquaintance, including the last night of all, she slept with her head pillowed beside mine. But my story slips away from me as I speak of her.

"It must have been on the night before I rescued Weena that I woke up about dawn. I had been restless, dreaming most disagreeably that I was drowned and that sea anemones were feeling over my face with their soft palps. I awoke with a start, and with an odd fancy that some grayish animal had just rushed out of the chamber in which I slept.

I tried to get to sleep again, but I felt restless and uncomfortable. It

was that dim gray hour when things are just creeping out of the darkness, when everything is colorless and clear cut and yet unreal. I got up and went down into the great hall and out upon the flagstones in front of the palace. I thought I would make a virtue of necessity and see the sunrise.

"The moon was setting, and the dying moonlight and first pallor of dawn mingled together in a ghastly half-light. The bushes were inky black, the ground a somber gray, the sky colorless and cheerless. And up the hill slope I thought I saw ghosts. Three several times as I scanned the slope I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary white ape-like creature running rather quickly up the hill, and once near the ruins I saw a group of two carrying some dark body. They moved hastily. I did not see what became of them. It seemed that they vanished among the bushes.

"The dawn was still indistinct, you must understand. I was feeling that chill, uncertain, early morning feeling you may have experienced. I doubted my eyes. As the eastern sky grew brighter, and the light of the day increased, and vivid coloring came back to the world once more, I scanned the view keenly, but I saw no confirmation of my white figures. They were mere creatures of the half light.

"'They must have been ghosts," said I; "I wonder whence they dated.'

"For a queer notion of Grant Allen's came into my head and amused me. If each generation dies and leaves ghosts, he argues, the world at last will get overcrowded with them. On that theory they would have become very thick in eight hundred thousand years from now, and it was no great wonder to see four all at once. But the jest was unsatisfactory, and I was think-

ing of these figures all the morning until the rescue of Weena drove the subject out of my head. I associated them in some indefinite way with the white animal I had startled in my first passionate search for the Time Machine. But Weena was a pleasant substitute for such a topic.

"These ghostly shapes were soon destined to take possession of my mind in a far more vivid fashion. I think I have said how much hotter than our own was the weather of this future age. I cannot account for it. It may be the sun was hotter, or else the earth was nearer the sun. It is usual to assume that the sun will go on cooling steadily in the future, but people unfamiliar with such speculations as those of the younger Darwin, forget that the planets must ultimately, one by one, fall back into the parent body. As these catastrophies occur the sun will blaze out again with renewed energy. It may be that some inner planet had suffered

this fate. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the sun was very much hotter than it is now.

"It was one very hot morning, my fourth morning, I think, as I was seeking a refuge from the heat and glare in a colossal ruin near the great house where I sheltered, that this remarkable incident occurred. Clambering among these heaps of masonry, I found a long narrow gallery, the end and side windows of which were blocked by fallen masses of masonry and which by contrast with the brilliance outside seemed at first impenetrably dark to me.

"I entered it groping, for the change from light to blackness made spots of color swim before me. Suddenly I halted spell-bound. A pair of eyes, luminous by reflection against the daylight without, was watching me out of the obscurity!

"The old instinctive dread of wild animals came upon me. I clenched my hands and steadfastly looked into

the glaring eyeballs. I feared to turn. Then the thought of the absolute security in which humanity appeared to be living came to my mind. Then I remembered that strange dread of the dark.

"Overcoming my fear to some extent, I advanced a step, and spoke. I will admit that my voice was hoarse and ill controlled. I put out my hand, and touched something soft.

"At once the eyes darted sideways, and something white ran past me. I turned, with my heart in my mouth, and saw a queer little ape-like figure, with the head held down in a peculiar manner, running across the sunlit space behind me. It blundered against a block of granite, staggered aside, and in a moment was hidden in a black shadow beneath another pile of ruined masonry.

"My impression of it was of course very imperfect. It was of a dull white color, and had strange, large,

grayish-red eyes. There was some flaxen hair on its head and down its back. But, as I say, it went too fast for me to see distinctly. I cannot even say whether it ran on all fours, or only with its fore arms held very low.

"After a momentary hesitation I followed the creature into the second heap of ruins. I could not find it there at first, but after a time, in the profound obscurity I came upon one of those round, well-like openings, of which I have told you, half closed by a fallen pillar. A sudden thought came to me. Could the thing have vanished down the shaft? I lit a match, and, looking down, saw a small white moving figure, with large bright eyes, that regarded me steadfastly as it retreated.

"The thing made me shudder. It was so like a human spider. It was clambering down the wall of the shaft, and now I noticed for the first time a number of metal projections

for foot and hand, forming a kind of ladder down.

"Suddenly the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hand, going out as it dropped; and when I had lit another, the little monster had disappeared.

"I do not know how long I sat peering down the portentous well. Very slowly could I persuade myself that the thing I had seen was a man. But gradually the real truth dawned upon me; that man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals; that my graceful children of the upperworld were not the only descendants of the men of my generation, but that this bleached, nocturnal thing that had flashed before me, was also heir to our age.

"I thought of the flickering pillars, and of my theory of an underground ventilation. I began to suspect their true import.

"But what was this creature doing

in my scheme of a perfectly balanced organization? How was it related to the indolent serenity of the beautiful overworld people? And what was hidden down below there? I sat upon the edge of the well, telling myself I had nothing to fear in descending, and that there I must go for the solution of my difficulties, and withal I was absolutely afraid to go down.

"As I hesitated, two of the beautiful upperworld people came running in their amorous sport, across the daylight into the shadow. One pursued the other, flinging flowers at her as he ran. They seemed disappointed when they found me with my arm against the overturned pillar, peering down the well. Apparently, it was considered bad form to notice these apertures, for when I pointed to it, and tried to frame a question about it in their tongue, they seemed distressed, and turned away. They were, however, interested by my

matches, and I struck several to amuse them.

"However, all my attempts to woo them toward the subject I wanted failed; and presently I left them. I resolved to go back to Weena, and see what I could get from her.

"But my mind was already in revolution, my guesses and impressions slipping and sliding to a new adjustment. I had now the clew to these wells, to the ventilating towers, to the problem of the ghosts, and a hint, indeed, of the meaning of the bronze gates and the fate of the Time Machine. Vaguely indeed, there came a suggestion toward the economic problem that had puzzled me.

"Here was the new view: Evidently this second species of man was subterranean. There were three circumstances in particular that made me think its rare emergence upon the surface was the outcome of long subterraneous habit. In the first place, the bleached appearance,

common in most animals that live largely in the dark—the white fish of the Kentucky caves, for instance. Then the large eyes and their capacity for reflecting the light—a common feature of nocturnal eyes, witness the owl and the cat. And finally the evident confusion in the sunlight, the hasty flight toward dark shadow, and the carriage of the head while in the light, re-enforced the idea of an extremely sensitive retina.

"Beneath my feet, then, the earth must be tunneled out to an enormous extent, and in these caverns the new race lived. The presence of ventilating shafts and wells all along the hill slopes—everywhere, in fact, except along the river valley—showed how universally the ramifications of the underworld extended.

"And it was natural to assume that it was in the underworld that the necessary work of the overworld was performed. This was so plausible that I accepted it unhesitatingly.

From that I went on to assume how the splitting of the human species came about. I dare say you will anticipate what shape my theory took, though I soon felt it was still short of the truth of the case.

"But at first, starting from the problems of our own age, it seemed as clear as daylight to me that the gradual widening of the present merely temporary and social difference of the capitalist from the laborer was the key to the explanation. No doubt it will seem grotesque enough to you and wildly incredible, and yet even now there are circumstances that point in the way things have gone. There is a tendency plainly enough to utilize underground space for the less ornamental purposes of civilization; there is the Metropolitan Railway in London, for instance, and all these new electric railways; there are subways, and underground workrooms, restaurants, and so forth. Evidently,

I thought, this tendency had increased until industry had gradually lost sight of the day, going into larger and larger underground factories, in which the workers would spend an increasing amount of their time. Even now, an East End worker lives in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth and the clear sky altogether.

"Then again, the exclusive tendency of richer people, due, no doubt, to the increasing refinement of their education and the widening gulf between them and the rude violence of the poor, is already leading to the closing of considerable portions of the surface of the country against these latter. About London, for instance, perhaps half the prettier country is shut up from such intrusion. And the same widening gulf, due to the length and expense of the higher educational process and the increased facilities for, and tempta-

tion toward, forming refined habits among the rich, will make that frequent exchange between class and class, that promotion and intermarriage which at present retards the splitting of our species along the lines of social stratification, less and less frequent.

"So, in the end, you would have above ground the Haves, pursuing health, comfort, and beauty, and below ground the Have-nots; the workers, getting continually adapted to their labor. No doubt, once they were below ground, considerable rents would be charged for the ventilation of their caverns. Workers who struck work would starve or be suffocated for arrears of ventilator rent; workers who were so constituted as to be miserable and rebellious would die. In the end, if the balance was held permanent, the survivors would become as well adapted to the conditions of their subterranean life as the overworld

people were to theirs, and as happy in their way. It seemed to me that the refined beauty of the overworld, and the etiolated pallor of the lower, followed naturally enough.

"The great triumph of humanity I had dreamed of now took a different shape in my mind. It had been no triumph of universal education and general co-operation, such as I had imagined at the first. Instead, I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working out to a logical conclusion the industrial system of to-day. The triumph of the overworld humanity had not been simply a triumph over nature, but a triumph over nature and their fellowmen.

"I must warn you this was my theory at the time. I had no convenient Cicerone on the pattern of the Utopian books. My explanation may be absolutely wrong. I still think it the most plausible one. Bu even on this supposition the balan

MUTILATED PAGES

civilization that was at last attained must have long since passed its zenith, and was now far gone in decay. The too perfect security of the overworld had led these to a slow movement of degeneration at last—to a general dwindling of size, strength, and intelligence. That I already saw clearly enough, but what had happened to the lower world I did not yet suspect. Yet from what I had seen of the Morlocks,—that, by the bye, was the name by which these creatures were called,—I could imagine the modification of the human type was far more profound in the underworld than among the Eloi, the beautiful races that I already knew.

"Then came some troublesome doubts. Why had the Morlocks taken my Time Machine? For I felt sure these underpeople had taken it. Why, too, if the Eloi were masters, could they not restore the ap[illegible]hing to me? And why were the subt[illegible]i so afraid of the dark?

MUTILATED PAGES

"I determined, as I have said, to question Weena about this underworld, but here again I was disappointed. At first she would not understand my questions, and then she refused to answer. She shivered as though the topic was unendurable. And when I pressed her, perhaps a little harshly, she burst into tears.

"They were the only tears I ever saw in that future age, except my own. When I saw them I ceased abruptly to trouble about the Morlocks, and was only concerned in driving these signs of her human inheritance out of her eyes again. And presently she was smiling and clapping her hands while I solemnly burnt a match.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Morlocks.

IT may seem odd to you, but it was two days before I could follow up the clew of these Morlocks in what was manifestly the proper way, and descend into the well. I felt a peculiar shrinking from their pallid bodies. They were just the half-bleached color of the worms and things one sees preserved in spirit in a zoölogical museum. And they were cold to the touch. Probably my shrinking was largely due to the sympathetic influence of the Eloi, whose disgust of the Morlocks I now began to appreciate.

"The next night I did not sleep very well. Possibly my health was a little disordered. I was oppressed with doubt and perplexity. Once or twice

I had a feeling of intense fear for which I could perceive no definite reason. I remember creeping noiselessly into the great hall where the little people were sleeping in the moonlight—that night it was that Weena was among them—and feeling reassured by their presence. It occurred to me even then that when in the course of a few days the moon passed through its last quarter and the nights became dark, the appearance of these unpleasant creatures from below, these whitened Lemurs, these new vermin that had replaced the old, might be more abundant.

"On both these days I had the restless feeling of one who shirks an inevitable duty. I felt assured that the Time Machine was only to be recovered by boldly penetrating these subterranean mysteries. Yet I could not face it. If I had only had a companion it would have been different. But I was so horribly alone, and even to clamber down into

the darkness of the well appalled me.

"I don't know if you will understand my feeling, but I never felt quite safe at my back.

"It was this restless feeling, perhaps, that drove me further than I had hitherto gone in my exploring expeditions. Going to the southwestward toward the rising country that is now called Combe Wood, I observed far off, in the direction of nineteenth century Banstead, a vast green pile, of a different character from any I had hitherto seen. It was larger than even the largest of the palaces or ruins I knew, and the façade appeared to me Oriental in its character. The face of it had the luster as well as the pale green tint, a kind of bluish green, of a certain type of Chinese porcelain. The difference in appearance in the building suggested a difference in its use. I was minded to push on and explore it. But the day was growing late and I had come

upon the sight of the place after a long and tiring circuit. I resolved to postpone this examination for the following day, and returned to the welcome and caresses of little Weena.

"But the next morning I was in a mood of remorse for my hesitation in descending the well and facing the Morlocks in their caverns. I perceived my curiosity regarding this great pile of Green Porcelain was a mere self-deception to shirk the experience I dreaded by another day. I resolved I would make the descent without further waste of time, and started out in the early morning toward a well near the ruins of granite and aluminum.

"Little Weena ran by my side. She followed me to the well dancing, but when she saw me lean over the mouth and look downward, she seemed strangely disconcerted.

"'Good-by, little Weena,' said I, kissing her, and then putting her down I began to feel over the parapet

for the climbing hooks—rather hastily, for I feared my courage might leak away.

"At first Weena watched me in amazement, and then she gave a most piteous cry, and running to me began to pull at me with her little hands. I think her opposition nerved me rather to proceed. I shook her off, perhaps a little roughly, and in another moment I was in the throat of the well.

"I saw her agonized face over the parapet, and smiled to reassure her. Then I had to look down at the unstable hooks by which I hung.

"I had to clamber down a shaft of perhaps two hundred yards. The descent was effected by means of metallic bars projecting from the sides of the well, and since they were adapted to the needs of a creature much smaller and lighter than myself, I was speedily cramped and fatigued by the descent. And not simply fatigued. My weight suddenly bent

one of the hooks and almost swung me off it down into the blackness beneath.

"For a moment I hung by one hand, and after that experience I did not dare to rest again, and though my arms and back were presently acutely painful, I continued to clamber with as quick a motion as possible down the sheer descent. Glancing upward I saw the aperture, a mere small blue disk above me, in which a star was visible, and little Weena's head appeared as a round black projection. The thudding sound of some machine below me grew louder and more oppressive. Everything save that minute circle above was profoundly dark. When I looked up again Weena had disappeared.

"I was in an agony of discomfort. I had some thought of trying to go up the shaft again, and leave the underworld alone. But while I turned this over in my mind I continued to descend.

"It was with intense relief that I saw dimly coming up a foot to the right of me, a slender loophole in the wall of the shaft, and swinging myself in, found it was the aperture of a narrow horizontal tunnel in which I could lie down and rest.

"It was not too soon. My arms ached, my back was cramped, and I was trembling with the prolonged fear of falling. Besides this, the unbroken darkness had had a distressing effect upon my eyes. The air was full of the throbbing and hum of the machinery that pumped the air down the shaft.

"I do not know how long I lay in that tunnel. I was roused by a soft hand touching my face. Starting up in the darkness, I snatched at my matches and hastily striking one saw three grotesque, white creatures, similar to the one I had seen above ground in the ruin, hastily retreating before the light. Living as they did

in what appeared to me impenetrable darkness, their eyes were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the eyes of the abyssmal fishes or of any purely nocturnal creatures, and they reflected the light in the same way. I have no doubt they could see me in that rayless obscurity, and they did not seem to have any fear of me apart from the light. But so soon as I struck a match in order to see them, they fled incontinently, vanishing up dark gutters and tunnels from which their eyes glared at me in the strangest fashion.

"I tried to call to them, but what language they had was apparently a different one from that of the overworld people. So that I was needs left to my own unaided exploration. The thought of flight rather than exploration was even at that time in my mind.

"'You are in for it now,' said I to myself, and went on.

"Feeling my way along this tunnel

of mine, the confused noise of machinery grew louder, and presently the walls fell away from me and I came to a large open space, and striking another match saw I had entered a vast arched cavern extending into darkness, at last, beyond the range of my light.

"The view I had of this cavern was as much as one could see in the burning of a match. Necessarily my memory of it is very vague. Great shapes like big machines rose out of the dim and threw grotesque black shadows, in which the spectral Morlocks sheltered from the glare. The place, by the bye, was very stuffy and oppressive, and the faint *halitus* of freshly shed blood was in the air. Some way down the central vista was a little table of white metal upon which a meal seemed to be spread. The Morlocks at any rate were carnivorous. Even at the time I remember thinking what large animal could have survived to furnish the

red joint I saw. It was all very indistinct, the heavy smell, the big unmeaning shapes, the white figures lurking in the shadows, and only waiting for the darkness to come at me again. Then the match burned down and stung my fingers and fell, a wriggling red spot in the black.

"I have thought since how particularly ill equipped I was. When I had started with the Time Machine I had started with the absurd assumption that the men of the future would certainly be infinitely in front of us in all their appliances. I had come without arms, without medicine, without anything to smoke,—at times I missed tobacco frightfully,—even without enough matches. If I had only thought of a kodak! I could have flashed that glimpse of the underworld in a second and examined it at leisure. But as it was, I stood there with only the weapons and powers that Nature had endowed me with—hands, feet, and teeth—except

four safety matches that still remained to me.

"I was afraid to push my way in among all this machinery in the dark, and it was only with my last glimpse of light I discovered that my store of matches had run low. It had never occurred to me until that moment that there was any need to economize them, and I had wasted almost half of the box in astonishing the above-ground people, to whom fire was a novelty. As I say, I had four left.

"Then while I stood in the dark a hand touched mine; then some lank fingers came feeling over my face. I was sensible of a dull, unpleasant odor. I fancy I detected the breathing of a number of those little beings about me. I felt the box of matches in my hand being gently disengaged, and other hands behind me plucking at my clothing.

"The sense of these unseen creatures examining me was indescribably unpleasant. The sudden realization

of my ignorance of their ways of thinking and possible actions came home to me very vividly in the darkness. I shouted at them as loudly as I could. They started away from me, and then I could feel them approaching me again. They clutched at me more boldly, whispering odd sounds to each other. I shivered violently and shouted again, rather discordantly. This time they were not so seriously alarmed and made a queer laughing noise as they came toward me again.

"I will confess I was horribly frightened. I determined to strike another match and escape under its glare. Eking it out with a scrap of paper from my pocket, I made good my retreat to the narrow tunnel. But hardly had I entered this when my light was blown out, and I could hear them in the blackness rustling like wind among leaves and pattering like the rain, as they hurried after me.

"In a moment I was clutched by

several hands again, and there was no mistake now that they were trying to draw me back. I struck another light and waved it in their dazzled faces. You can scarcely imagine how nauseatingly inhuman those pale, chinless faces and great lidless, pinkish-gray eyes seemed, as they stared stupidly, evidently blinded by the light.

"So I gained time and retreated again, and when my second match had ended struck my third. That had almost burned through as I reached the opening of the tunnel upon the well. I lay down on the edge, for the throbbing whirl of the air-pumping machine below made me giddy, and felt sideways for the projecting hooks. As I did so my feet were grasped from behind and I was violently tugged backward. I lit my last match—and it incontinently went out. But I had my hand on the climbing bars now, and kicking violently disengaged myself from the

clutches of the Morlocks, and was speedily clambering up the shaft again.

"They remained peering and blinking up the shaft, except one little wretch who followed me for some way, and indeed well-nigh captured my boot as a trophy.

"That upward climb seemed unending. While I still had the last twenty or thirty feet of it above me, a deadly nausea came upon me. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping my hold. The last few yards was a frightful struggle against this faintness. Several times my head swam and I felt all the sensations of falling.

"At last I got over the well mouth somehow and staggered out of the ruin into the blinding sunlight. I fell upon my face. Even the soil seemed sweet and clean.

"Then I remember Weena kissing my hands and ears, and the voices of others of the Eloi. Then probably I was insensible for a time.

CHAPTER IX.

When the Night Came.

NOW, indeed, I seemed to be in a worse case than before. Hitherto, except during my night's anguish at the loss of the Time Machine, I had felt a sustaining hope of ultimate escape, but my hope was staggered by these new discoveries. Hitherto, I had merely thought myself impeded by the childish simplicity of the little people and by some unknown forces which I had only to understand in order to overcome. But there was an altogether new element in the sickening quality of the Morlocks, something inhuman and malign. Instinctively I loathed them. Before, I had felt as a man might feel who had fallen into a pit; my concern was with the pit and

how to get out again. But now I felt like a beast in a trap, whose enemy would presently come.

"The enemy I dreaded may surprise you. It was the darkness of the new moon. Weena had put this into my head by some, at first, incomprehensible remarks about the Dark Nights. It was not now such a very difficult problem to guess what the coming Dark Nights might mean. The moon was on the wane; each night there was a longer interval of darkness. And I now understood, to some slight degree, at least, the reason of the fear of the little upperworld people for the dark. I wondered vaguely what foul villany it might be that the Morlocks did under the darkness of the new moon.

"Whatever the origin of the existing conditions, I felt pretty sure now that my second hypothesis was all wrong. The upperworld people might once have been the favored aristocracy of the world, and the Morlocks

their mechanical servants, but that state of affairs had passed away long since. The two species that had resulted from the evolution of man were sliding down toward, or had already arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carlovingian kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They still possessed the earth on sufferance, since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had come at last to find the daylit surface unendurable. And the Morlocks made their garments, I inferred, and maintained them in their habitual need, perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service. They did it, as a standing horse paws with his foot, or as a man enjoys killing animals in sport—because ancient and departed necessities had impressed it on the organism. But clearly the old order was already in part reversed. The Nemesis of the delicate ones was creeping on apace. Ages ago, thousands of

generations ago, man had thrust his brother man out of the ease and sunlight of life. And now that brother was coming back—changed. Already the Eloi had begun to learn one old lesson anew. They were becoming acquainted again with Fear.

"Then suddenly came into my head the memory of the meat I had seen in the underworld. It seemed odd how this memory floated into my mind, not stirred up, as it were, by the current of my meditations, but coming in almost like a question from outside. I tried to recall the form of it. I had a vague sense of something familiar, but at that time I could not tell what it was.

"Still, however helpless the little people might be in the presence of their mysterious Fear, I was differently constituted. I came out of this age of ours, this ripe prime of the human race, when fear does not paralyze and mystery has lost its terrors. I at least would defend

myself. Without further delay I determined to make myself arms and a fastness where I might sleep with some security. From that refuge as a base I could face the strange world with some confidence again, a confidence I had lost now that I realized to what uncanny creatures I nightly lay exposed. I felt I could never sleep again until my bed was secure from them. I shuddered with horror to think how they must already have examined me during my sleep.

"I wandered during the afternoon along the valley of the Thames, but found nothing that commended itself to my mind as a sufficiently inaccessible retiring place. All the buildings and trees seemed easily practicable to such dexterous climbers as the Morlocks—to judge by their wells—must be. Then the tall pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain, and the polished gleam of its walls, came back to my memory, and in the evening, taking Weena like a

child upon my shoulder, I went up the hills toward the southwest.

"Now the distance I had reckoned was seven or eight miles, but it must have been nearer eighteen. I had first seen the Palace on a moist afternoon when distances are deceptively diminished. In addition, the heel of one of my shoes was loose, and a nail was working through the sole,—they were comfortable old shoes I wear about indoors,—so that I was lame. It was already long past sunset before I came in sight of the Palace, standing out in black silhouette against the pale yellow of the sky.

"Weena had been hugely delighted when first I carried her, but after a time she desired me to let her down and ran along by the side of me, occasionally darting off on either hand to pick flowers to stick in my pockets. My pockets had always puzzled Weena, but at the last she had concluded they were an eccentric kind of vases for floral decoration. At

least she utilized them for that purpose.

"And that reminds me! As I changed my jacket I found——"

(*The Time Traveler paused, put his hand into his pocket, and silently placed two withered flowers, not unlike very large white mallows, upon the little table. Then he resumed his narrative.*)

"As the hush of evening crept over the world and we proceeded over the hill-crest toward Wimbledon, Weena became tired and wanted to return to the house of gray stone. But I pointed out the distant pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain to her, and contrived to make her understand that we were seeking a refuge there from her Fear.

"You know that great pause that comes upon things before the dusk. Even the breeze stops in the trees. There is to me always an air of expectation about that evening stillness. The sky was clear, remote, and empty,

save for a few horizontal bars far down in the sunset.

"That night the expectation took the color of my fears. In the darkling calm my senses seemed preternaturally sharpened. I fancied I could even feel the hollowness of the ground beneath my feet, could indeed almost see through it, the Morlocks in their ant-hill going hither and thither and waiting for the dark. In this excited state I fancied that they would take my invasion of their burrows as a declaration of war. And why had they taken my Time Machine?

"So we went on in the quiet, and the twilight deepened into night. The clear blue of the distance faded and one star after another came out. The ground grew dim and the trees black. Weena's fears and her fatigue grew upon her. I took her in my arms and talked to her and caressed her. Then as the darkness grew profounder she put her arms round

my neck, and closing her eyes tightly pressed her face against my shoulder.

"We went down a long slope into a valley, and there in the dimness I almost walked into a little river. This I waded, and went up the opposite side of the valley, past a number of sleeping houses, and by a statue that appeared to me in the indistinct light to represent a faun, or some such figure, minus the head. Here, too, were acacias. So far, I had seen nothing of the Morlocks, but it was yet early in the night, and the darker hours before the old moon rose were still to come.

"From the brow of the next hill I saw a thick wood spreading wide and black before me. At this I hesitated. I could see no end to it either to the right or to the left. Feeling tired,—my feet, in particular, were very sore,—I carefully lowered Weena from my shoulder as I halted, and sat down upon the turf. I could no longer see the Palace of Green Por-

celain, and I was in doubt of my direction.

"I looked into the thickness of the wood, and thought of what it might hide. Under that dense tangle of branches one would be out of sight of the stars. Even were there no other lurking danger there,—a danger I did not care to let my imagination loose upon,—there would still be all the roots to stumble over, and the tree boles to strike myself against. I was very tired, too, after the excitements of the day, and I decided that I would not face it, but would pass the night upon the open hill.

"Weena, I was glad to discover, was fast asleep. I carefully wrapped her in my jacket, and sat down beside her to wait for the moonrise. The hillside upon which I sat was quiet and deserted, but from the black of the wood there came now and then a stir of living things.

"Above me shone the stars, for the night was clear. I felt a certain

sense of friendly comfort in their twinkling. All the old constellations had gone from the sky, however, for that slow movement that is imperceptible in a dozen human lifetimes, had long ago rearranged them in unfamiliar groupings. But the Milky Way, it seemed to me, was still the same tattered streamer of star dust as of yore. Southward—as I judged it—was a very bright red star that was new to me. It was even more splendid than our own green Sirius. Amid all these scintillating points of light, one planet shone kindly and steadily like the face of an old friend.

"Looking at these stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life. I thought of their unfathomable distance, and the slow, inevitable drift of their movements out of the unknown past into the unknown future. I thought of the great precessional cycle that the pole of the earth describes in the

heavens. Only forty times had that silent revolution occurred during all the years I had traversed. And during those few revolutions, all the activity, all the traditions, the carefully planned organizations, the nations, languages, literature, aspirations, even the mere memory of man as I knew man, had been swept out of existence. Instead were these frail creatures who had forgotten their high ancestry, and the white animals of which I went in fear. Then I thought of the great fear there was between these two species, and for the first time, with a sudden shiver, came the clear knowledge of what the meat I had seen might be. Yet it was too horrible! I looked at little Weena sleeping beside me, her face white and starlike under the stars, and forthwith dismissed the thought from my mind.

"Through that long night I kept my mind off the Morlocks as well as I could, and whiled away the time by

trying to fancy I could find traces of the old constellations among the new confusion. The sky kept very clear, except a hazy cloud or so. No doubt I dozed at times. Then, as my vigil wore on, came a faintness in the eastward sky like the reflection of some colorless fire, and the old moon rose thin and peaked and white. And close behind and overtaking it and overflowing it the dawn came, pale at first and then growing pink and warm.

"No Morlocks had approached us. Indeed, I had seen none upon the hill that night. And in the confidence of renewed day it almost seemed to me that my fear had been unreasonable. I stood up, and found my foot with the loose heel swollen at the ankle and painful under the heel. I sat down again, took off my shoes, and flung them away.

"I awakened Weena, and forthwith we went down into the wood, now green and pleasant, instead of black

and forbidding. And there we found some fruit wherewith to break our fast. We soon met others of the dainty ones, laughing and dancing in the sunlight, as though there was no such thing in nature as the night.

"Then I thought once more of the meat that I had seen. I felt assured now of what it was, and, from the bottom of my heart, I pitied this last feeble rill from the great flood of humanity. Clearly, somewhere in the long ages of human decay, the food of the Morlocks had run short. Possibly they had lived on rats and suchlike vermin. Even now, man is far less discriminating and exclusive in his food than he was, far less than any monkey. His prejudice against human flesh is no deep-seated instinct. And so these inhuman sons of men——

"I tried to look at the thing in a scientific spirit. After all, these were scarcely to be counted human beings; less human they were and more re-

mote than our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the minds that would have made this state torment were gone. Why should I trouble? The Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the antlike Morlocks preserved and preyed upon, probably saw to the breeding of. And there was Weena dancing by my side!

"Then I tried to preserve myself from the horror that was coming upon me by regarding it as a rigorous punishment of human selfishness; man had been content to live in ease and delight upon the labors of his fellow-men; had taken Necessity as his watchword and excuse, and in fullness of time Necessity had come home to him. I tried even a Carlyle-like scorn of these wretched aristocrats in decline.

"But this attitude of mind was impossible. However great their intellectual degradation, the Eloi had kept too much of the human form

not to claim my sympathy, and to make me perforce a participant in their degradation and their Fear.

"I had at this time very vague ideas of what course I should pursue. My first idea was to secure some safe place of refuge for Weena and myself, and to make myself such arms of metal or stone as I could contrive. That necessity was immediate. In the next place, I hoped to procure some means of fire, so that I should have the weapon of a torch at hand, for nothing, I knew, would be more efficient against these Morlocks. Then I wanted to arrange some contrivance to break open the doors of bronze under the white sphinx. I had in mind a battering ram. I had a persuasion that if I could enter these doors and carry a blaze of light before me, I should discover the Time Machine and escape. I could not imagine the Morlocks were powerful enough to remove it far. Weena I had re-

solved to bring with me to our own Time.

"Turning such schemes over in my mind, I pursued our way toward the building which my fancy had chosen as our dwelling-place.

CHAPTER X.

The Palace of Green Porcelain.

THIS Palace of Green Porcelain, when we approached it about noon, was, I found, deserted and falling into ruin. Only ragged vestiges of glass remained in its windows, and great sheets of the green facing had fallen away in places from the corroded metallic framework. It lay very high upon a turfy down, and, looking northeastward before I entered it, I was surprised to see a large estuary, or an arm of the sea, where I judged Wandsworth and Battersea must once have been. I thought then—though I never followed the thought up—of what might have happened, or might be happening, to the living things in the sea.

"The material of the Palace proved, on examination, to be indeed porcelain, and above the face of it I saw an inscription in some unknown characters. I thought, rather foolishly, that Weena might help me to interpret this, but I only learned that the bare idea of writing had never entered her head. She always seemed to me, I fancy, more human than she was, perhaps because her affection was so human.

"Within the big valves of the door—which were open and broken—we found, instead of the customary hall, a long gallery lit by many side windows. Even at the first glance I was reminded of a museum. The tiled floor was thick with dust, and a remarkable array of miscellaneous objects were shrouded in the same gray covering. Clearly, the place had been derelict for a very considerable time.

"Then I perceived, standing strange and guant in the center of the hall,

what was clearly the lower part of the skeleton of some huge animal. As I approached this I recognized by the oblique feet that it was some extinct creature after the fashion of the *megatherium*. The skull and the upper bones lay beside it in the thick dust, and in one place where rain water had dripped through some leak in the roof, the skeleton had decayed away. Further along the gallery was the huge skeleton barrel of a *brontosaurus*. My museum hypothesis was confirmed. Going toward the side of the gallery I found what appeared to be sloping shelves, and clearing away the thick dust, I found the old familiar glass cases of our own time. But these must have been air-tight to judge from the fair preservation of some of their contents.

"Clearly we stood among the ruins of some latter day South Kensington. Here apparently was the Palæontological Section, and a very splendid array of fossils it must have been;

though the inevitable process of decay that had been warded off for a time, and had, through the extinction of bacteria and fungi, lost ninety-nine-hundreths of its force, was nevertheless, with extreme sureness, if with extreme slowness, at work again upon all its treasures. Here and there I found traces of the little people in the shape of rare fossils broken to pieces or threaded in strings upon reeds. And the cases had in some instances been bodily removed—by the Morlocks, as I judged.

"The place was very silent. The thick dust deadened our footsteps. Weena, who had been rolling a sea urchin down the sloping glass of a case, presently came, as I stared about me, and very quietly took my hand and stood beside me.

"At first I was so much surprised by this ancient monument of an intellectual age that I gave no thought to the possibilities it presented me.

Even my preoccupation about the Time Machine and the Morlocks receded a little from my mind. The curiosity concerning human destiny that had led to my time traveling was removed. Now, judging from the size of the place, this Palace of Green Porcelain had a great deal more in it than a gallery of palæontology; possibly historical galleries, it might be even a library. To me, at least in my present circumstances, these would be vastly more interesting than this spectacle of old-time geology in decay.

"Exploring, I found another short gallery running transversely to the first. This appeared to be devoted to minerals, and the sight of a block of sulphur set my mind running on gunpowder. But I could find no saltpeter; indeed no nitrates of any kind. Doubtless they had deliquesced ages ago. Yet the sulphur hung in my mind and set up a train of thinking. As for the rest of the

contents of that place, though on the whole they were the best preserved of all I saw—I had little interest. I am no specialist in mineralogy, and I soon went on down a very ruinous aisle running parallel to the first hall I had entered.

"Apparently this section had been devoted to Natural History, but here everything had long since passed out of recognition. A few shriveled vestiges of what had once been stuffed animals, dried-up mummies in jars that had once held spirit, a brown dust of departed plants, that was all. I was sorry for this, because I should have been glad to trace the patient readjustments by which the conquest of animated nature had been attained.

"From this we come to a gallery of simply colossal proportions, but singularly ill lit, and with its floor running downward at a slight angle from the end at which I entered it. At intervals there hung white globes from

the ceiling,—many of them cracked and smashed,—which suggested that originally the place had been artificially lit. Here I was more in my element, for I found rising on either side of me the huge bulks of big machines, all greatly corroded, and many broken down, but some still fairly complete in all their parts. You know I have a certain weakness for mechanism, and I was inclined to linger among these, the more so since for the most part they had the interest of puzzles, and I could make only the vaguest guesses of what they were for. I fancied if I could solve these puzzles I should find myself in the possession of powers that might be of use against the Morlocks.

"Suddenly Weena came very close to my side, so suddenly that she startled me.

"Had it not been for her I do not think I should have noticed that the floor of the gallery sloped at

all.* The end I had entered was quite above ground, and was lit by rare slit-like windows. As one went down the length of the place, the ground came up against these windows, until there was at last a pit like the 'area' of a London house, before each, and only a narrow line of daylight at the top. I went slowly along, puzzling about the machines, and had been too intent upon them to notice the gradual diminution of the light, until Weena's increasing apprehension attracted my attention.

"Then I saw that the gallery ran down at last into a thick darkness. I hesitated about proceeding, and then as I looked around me, I saw that the dust was here less abundant and its surface less even. Further away toward the dim, it appeared to be broken by a number of small narrow footprints. At that my sense of

* It may be, of course, that the floor did not slope, but that the museum was built upon the side of the hill.—*Editor.*

the immediate presence of the Morlocks revived. I felt that I was wasting my time in my academic examination of this machinery. I called to mind that it was already far advanced in the afternoon, and that I had still no weapon, no refuge, and no means of making a fire. And then, down in the remote black of the gallery, I heard a peculiar pattering and those same odd noises I had heard down the well.

"I took Weena's hand. Then struck with a sudden idea, I left her, and turned to a machine from which projected a lever not unlike those in a signal box. Clambering upon the stand of the machine and grasping this lever in my hands, I put all my weight upon it sideways. Weena, deserted in the central aisle, began suddenly to whimper. I had judged the strength of the lever pretty correctly, for it snapped after a minute's strain, and I rejoined Weena with a mace in my hand more than sufficient,

I judged, for any Morlock skull I might encounter.

"And I longed very much to kill a Morlock or so. Very inhuman, you may think, to want to go killing one's own descendants, but it was impossible somehow to feel any humanity in the things. Partly my disinclination to leave Weena, and a persuasion that if I went to slake my thirst for murder the Time Machine might suffer, restrained me from going straight down the gallery and killing the brutes I could see there.

"Mace in one hand and Weena in the other we went out of that gallery and into another still larger, which at the first glance reminded me of a military chapel hung with tattered flags. The brown and charred rags that hung from the sides of it, I presently recognized as the decaying vestiges of books. They had long since dropped to pieces and every semblance of print had left them. But here and there were warped and

cracked boards and metallic clasps that told the tale well enough.

"Had I been a literary man I might perhaps have moralized upon the futility of all ambition, but as it was, the thought that struck me with keenest force, was the enormous waste of labor rather than of hope, to which this somber gallery of rotting paper testified. At the time I will confess, though it seems a petty trait now, that I thought chiefly of the Philosophical Transactions, and my own seventeen papers upon physical optics.

"Then going up a broad staircase we came to what may once have been a gallery of technical chemistry. And here I had not a little hope of discovering something to help me. Except at one end where the roof had collapsed, this gallery was well preserved. I went eagerly to every unbroken case. And at last, in one of the really air-tight cases, I found a box of matches. Very eagerly I

tried them. They were perfectly good. They were not even damp.

"At that discovery I suddenly turned to Weena. 'Dance!' I cried to her in her own tongue. For now I had a weapon indeed against the horrible creatures we feared. And so in that derelict museum, upon the thick soft coating of dust, to Weena's huge delight, I solemnly performed a sort of composite dance, whistling 'The Land of the Leal' as cheerfully as I could. In part it was a modest cancan, in part a step dance, in part a skirt dance,—so far as my tail coat permitted,—and in part original. For naturally I am inventive, as you know.

"Now, I still think that for this box of matches to have escaped the wear of time for immemorial years was a strange, and for me, a most fortunate thing. Yet oddly enough I found here a far more unlikely substance, and that was camphor. I found it in a sealed jar, that, by chance, I sup-

posed had been really hermetically sealed. I fancied at first the stuff was paraffin wax, and smashed the jar accordingly. But the odor of camphor was unmistakable. It struck me as singularly odd, that among the universal decay, this volatile substance had chanced to survive, perhaps through many thousand years. Is reminded me of a sepia painting I had once seen done from the ink of a fossil Belemnite that must have perished and become fossilized millions of years ago. I was about to throw this camphor on one side, and then remembering that it was inflammable and burnt with a good bright flame, I put it into my pocket.

"I found no explosives, however, or any means of breaking down the bronze doors. As yet my iron crowbar was the most hopeful thing I had chanced upon. Nevertheless I left that gallery greatly elated by my discoveries.

"I cannot tell you the whole story of my exploration through that long afternoon. It would require a great effort of memory to recall it at all in the proper order. I remember a long gallery containing the rusting stands of arms of all ages, and that I hesitated between my crowbar and a hatchet or a sword. I could not carry both, however, and my bar of iron, after all, promised best against the bronze gates. There were rusty guns, pistols, and rifles here; most of them were masses of rust, but many of aluminum, and still fairly sound. But any cartridges or powder there may have been had rotted into dust. One corner I saw was charred and shattered; perhaps, I thought, by an explosion among the specimens there. In another place was a vast array of idols—Polynesian, Mexican, Grecian, Phœnician, every country on earth, I should think. And here, yielding to an irresistible impulse, I wrote my name upon the nose of a

steatite monster from South America that particularly took my fancy.

"As the evening drew on my interest waned. I went through gallery after gallery, dusty, silent, often ruinous, the exhibits sometimes mere heaps of rust and lignite, sometimes fresher. In one place I suddenly found myself near a model of a tin mine, and then by the merest accident I discovered in an air-tight case two dynamite cartridges; I shouted 'Eureka!' and smashed the case joyfully. Then came a doubt. I hesitated, and then selecting a little side gallery I made my essay. I never felt such a bitter disappointment as I did then, waiting five, ten, fifteen minutes for the explosion that never came. Of course the things were dummies, as I might have guessed from their presence there. I really believe had they not been so, I should have rushed off incontinently there and then, and blown sphinx, bronze doors, and, as it proved, my chances of finding the

Time Machine all together into non-existence.

"It was after that, I think, that we came to a little open court within the palace, turfed and with three fruit trees. There it was we rested and refreshed ourselves.

"Toward sunset I began to consider our position. Night was now creeping upon us and my inaccessible hiding-place was still to be found. But that troubled me very little now. I had in my possession a thing that was perhaps the best of all defenses against the Morlocks. I had matches again. I also had the camphor in my pocket if a blaze were required. It seemed to me that the best thing we could do would be to pass the night in the open again, protected by a fire.

"In the morning there was the Time Machine to obtain. Toward that as yet I had only my iron mace. But now with my growing knowledge I felt very differently toward the bronze doors than I had done

hitherto. Up to this I had refrained from forcing them, largely because of the mystery on the other side. They had never impressed me as being very strong, and I hoped to find my bar of iron not altogether inadequate for the work.

CHAPTER XI.

In the Darkness of the Forest.

E emerged from the Palace of Green Porcelain while the sun was still in part above the horizon. I was determined to reach the white sphinx early the next morning, and I proposed before the dusk came to push through the woods that had stopped me on the previous journey. My plan was to go as far as possible that night, and then, building a fire about us, to sleep under the protection of its glare. Accordingly as we went along I gathered any sticks or dried grass I saw, and presently had my arms full of such litter. So loaded, our progress was slower than I had anticipated, and besides, Weena was tired. I, too, began to suffer from sleepi-

ness, and it was fully night before we reached the wood.

"Now, upon the shrubby hill upon the edge of this, Weena would have stopped, fearing the darkness before us. But a singular sense of impending calamity, that should indeed have served me as a warning, drove me onward. I had been without sleep for the length of a night and two days, and I was feverish and irritable. I felt sleep coming upon me, and with it the Morlocks.

"While we hesitated I saw among the bushes up the slope behind us, and dim against the sky, three crouching figures. There was scrub and long grass all about us, and I did not feel safe from their insidious approach. The forest, I calculated, was rather less than a mile in breadth. If we could get through it, the hillside beyond was bare, and to me it seemed an altogether safer resting-place. I thought that with my matches and the camphor I could

contrive to keep my path illuminated through the woods. Yet it was evident that if I was to flourish matches with my hands I should have to abandon my firewood. So rather reluctantly I put this down.

"Then it came into my head that I would amaze our friends behind by lighting it. Ultimately I was to discover the atrocious folly of this proceeding, but just then it came to my mind as an ingenious move for covering our retreat.

"I don't know if you have ever thought what a rare thing in the absence of man and in a temperate climate, flames must be. The sun's heat is rarely strong enough to burn even when focussed by dewdrops, as is sometimes the case in more tropical districts. Lightning may blast and blacken, but it rarely gives rise to widespread fire. Decaying vegetation may occasionally smoulder with the heat of its fermentation, but this again rarely results in flames. Now,

in this decadent age the art of fire-making had been altogether forgotten on the earth. The red tongues that went licking up my heap of wood were an altogether new and strange thing to Weena.

"She wanted to run to it and play with it. I believe she would have cast herself into it had I not restrained her. But I caught her up and in spite of her struggles plunged boldly before me into the wood. For a little way the glare of my fire lit the path. Looking back presently I could see, through the crowded tree stems, that from my heap of sticks the blaze had spread to some bushes adjacent, and a curved line of fire was creeping up the grass of the hill. I laughed at that.

"Then I turned toward the dark trees before me again. It was very black and Weena clung to me convulsively, but there was still, as my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, sufficient light for me to avoid blun-

dering against the stems. Overhead it was simply black, except when here and there a gap of remote blue sky shone down upon me. I lit none of my matches because I had no hand free. Upon my left arm I carried my little one, in my right hand I had the iron bar I had wrenched from the machine.

"For some way I heard nothing but the crackling twigs under my feet, the faint rustle of the breeze above, and my breathing and the throb of the blood vessels in my ears. Then I seemed to hear a pattering about me.

"I pushed on grimly. The pattering became more distinct, and then I heard the same queer sounds and voices I had heard before in the underworld. There were evidently several of the Morlocks, and they were closing in upon me.

"In another minute I felt a tug at my coat, then something at my arm. Weena shivered violently and became quite still.

"It was time for a match. But to get at that I must put her down. I did so, and immediately as I fumbled with my pocket a struggle began in the darkness about my knees, perfectly silent on her part and with the same peculiar cooing sounds on the part of the Morlocks. Soft little hands, too, were creeping over my coat and back, touching even my neck.

"The match scratched and fizzed. I held it flaring, and immediately the white backs of the Morlocks became visible as they fled amid the trees. I hastily took a lump of camphor from my pocket and prepared to light it as soon as the match waned.

"Then I looked at Weena. She was lying clutching my feet and quite motionless, with her face to the ground. With a sudden fright I stooped to her. She seemed scarcely to breathe. I lit the block of camphor and flung it to the ground, and as it spit and flared up and drove back the Morlocks and the shadows,

I knelt down and lifted up Weena. The wood behind seemed full of the stir and murmur of a great company of creatures.

"Apparently she had fainted. I put her carefully upon my shoulder and rose to push on, and then came a horrible realization.

"While maneuvering with my matches and Weena, I had turned myself about several times, and now I had not the faintest idea in what direction my path lay. For all I knew I might be facing back toward the Palace of Green Porcelain.

"I found myself in a cold perspiration. I had to think rapidly what to do. I determined to build a fire and encamp where we were. I put the motionless Weena down upon a turfy bole. Very hastily, as my first lump of camphor waned, I began collecting sticks and leaves.

"Here and there out of the darkness round me the eyes of the Morlocks shone like carbuncles.

"Presently the camphor flickered and went out. I lit a match, and as I did so saw two white forms that had been approaching Weena dash hastily back. One was so blinded by the light that he came straight for me, and I felt his bones grind under the blow of my fist. He gave a whoop of dismay, staggered a little way, and fell down.

"I lit another piece of camphor and went on gathering my bonfire. Presently I noticed how dry was some of the foliage above me, for since I had arrived on the Time Machine, a matter of a week, no rain had fallen. So instead of casting about among the trees for fallen twigs I began leaping up and dragging down branches. Very soon I had a choking smoky fire of green wood and dry sticks, and could save my other lumps of camphor.

"Then I turned to where Weena lay beside my iron mace. I tried what I could to revive her, but she lay like

one dead. I could not even satisfy myself whether or not she breathed.

"Now the smoke of the fire beat over toward me, and it must have made me suddenly heavy. Moreover the vapor of camphor was in the air. My fire would not want replenishing for an hour or so. I felt very weary after my exertion and sat down. The wood, too, was full of a slumberous murmur that I did not understand.

"I seemed merely to nod and open my eyes. Then it was all dark around me, and the Morlocks had their hands upon me. Flinging off their clinging fingers I hastily felt in my pocket for the match-box, and—it had gone! Then they gripped and closed with me again.

"In a moment I knew what had happened. I had slept, and my fire had gone out, and the bitterness of death came over my soul. The forest seemed full of the smell of

burning wood. I was caught by the neck, by the hair, by the arms, and pulled down. It was indescribably horrible in the darkness to feel all these soft creatures heaped upon me. I felt as if I was in a monstrous spider's web. I was overpowered. Down I went.

"I felt some little teeth nipping at my neck. Abruptly I rolled over, and as I did so, my hand came against my iron lever. Somehow this gave me strength for another effort. I struggled up, shaking off these human rats from me, and then holding the bar short, I thrust where I judged their faces might be. I could feel the succulent giving of flesh and bone under my blows, and for a moment I was free.

"The strange exultation that so often seems to accompany fighting came upon me. I knew that both I and Weena were lost, but I determined to make the Morlocks pay for their meat. I stood with my back to

a tree swinging the iron bar before me. The whole wood was full of the stir and cries of them.

"A minute passed. Their voices seemed to rise to a higher pitch of excitement and their movements became faster. Yet none came within reach of me. I stood glaring at the blackness. Then suddenly came hope.

"What if the Morlocks had no courage?

"And close on the heels of that came a strange thing. The darkness seemed to grow luminous. Very dimly I began to see the Morlocks about me,—three, battered at my feet, —and then I perceived with incredulous surprise that the others were running, in an incessant stream, as it seemed to me, from behind me, and away through the wood in front of me. And their backs seemed no longer white, but reddish.

"Then as I stood agape I saw, across a gap of starlight between

the branches, a little red spark go drifting and vanish. And at that I understood the smell of burning wood, the slumberous murmur that was growing now into a gusty roaring, the red glow, and the flight of the Morlocks.

"Stepping out from behind my tree and looking back, I saw through the back pillars of the nearer trees the flames of the burning forest. No doubt it was my first fire coming after me. With that I hastily looked round for Weena, but she was gone. The hissing and crackling behind me, the explosive thud as each fresh tree burst into flame, left little time for reflection. With my iron bar still in hand I followed in the path of the Morlocks.

"It was a close race. Once the flames crept forward so swiftly on my right as I ran, that I was outflanked and had to strike off to the left. But at last I emerged upon a small open place, and as I did so, a Morlock

came blundering toward me and passed me, and went on straight into the fire.

"And now I was to see the most weird and horrible scene, I think, of all that I beheld in that future age.

"This whole space was as bright as day with the reflection of the fire. In the center was a small hillock or tumulus surmounted by a scorched hawthorn. Beyond this hill was another arm of the burning forest from which yellow tongues were already writhing, and completely encircling the space with a fence of fire. Upon the hillside were perhaps thirty or forty Morlocks, dazzled by the light and heat of the fire, which was now very bright and hot, blundering hither and thither against each other in their bewilderment. At first I did not realize their blindness, and struck furiously at them with my bar in a frenzy of fear as they approached me, killing one and

crippling several others. But when I had watched the gestures of one of them groping under the hawthorn against the red sky, and heard the moans to which they all gave vent, I was assured of their absolute helplessness and refrained from striking any of them again. Yet every now and then one would come straight toward me, setting loose a quivering horror, that made me quick to elude him. At one time the flames died down somewhat, and I feared these foul creatures would presently be able to see me, and I was even thinking of beginning the fight by killing some of them before this should happen, but the fire burst out again brightly and I stayed my hand. I walked about the hill among them and avoiding them, looking for some trace of Weena, but I found nothing.

"At last I sat down upon the summit of the hillock and watched this strange incredible company of the blind, groping to and fro and mak-

ing uncanny noises to one another, as the glare of the fire beat upon them. The coiling uprush of smoke streamed across the sky, and through the rare tatters of that red canopy, remote as though they belonged to another universe, shone the little stars. Two or three Morlocks came blundering into me and I drove them off, trembling myself as I did so, with blows of my fists. For the most of that night I was persuaded it was a nightmare. I bit myself and screamed aloud in a passionate desire to awake. I beat on the ground with my hands, and got up, and sat down again, and wandered here and there, and again sat down on the crest of the hill. Then I would fall to rubbing my eyes and calling upon God to let me awake. Thrice I saw Morlocks put their heads down in a kind of agony and rush into the flames. But at last, above the subsiding red of the fire, above the streaming masses of black smoke

and the whitening and blackening tree stumps, and the diminishing number of these dim creatures, came the white light of the day.

"I searched again over the open space for some traces of Weena, but could find none. I had half feared to discover her mangled remains, but clearly they had left her poor little body in the forest. I cannot describe how it relieved me to think that it had escaped the awful fate to which it seemed destined. As I thought of that I was almost moved to begin a massacre of the defenseless abominations about me, but I contained myself. This hillock, as I have said, was a kind of island in the forest. From its summit I could now make out, through a haze of smoke, the Palace of Green Porcelain, and from that I could get my bearings for the white sphinx. And so leaving the remnant of these damned souls going hither and thither and moaning, as the day grew clearer,

I tied some grass about my feet and limped on across smoking ashes and among black stems that still pulsated internally with fire, toward the hiding place of the Time Machine.

"I walked slowly, for I was almost exhausted as well as lame, and I felt the most intense wretchedness on account of the horrible death of little Weena, which then seemed an overwhelming calamity. Yet even now, as I tell you of it in this old familiar room, it seems more like the sorrow of a dream than an actual loss. But it left me absolutely lonely again that morning—terribly alone. I began to think of this house of mine, of this fireside, of some of you, and with such thoughts came a longing that was pain.

"As I walked over the smoking ashes under the bright morning sky I made a discovery. In my trouser pocket were still some loose matches. The box must have leaked before it was lost!

CHAPTER XII.

The Trap of the White Sphinx.

SO about eight or nine in the morning I came to the same seat of yellow metal from which I had viewed the world upon the evening of my arrival. I thought of my hasty conclusions upon that evening and could not refrain from laughing bitterly at my confidence. Here was the same beautiful scene, the same abundant foliage, the same splendid palaces and magnificent ruins, the same silver river running between its fertile banks. The gay robes of the beautiful people moved hither and thither among the trees. Some were bathing in exactly the place where I had saved Weena, and that suddenly gave me a keen stab of pain. And like blots upon the landscape rose

the cupolas above the ways to the underworld. I understood now what all the beauty of the overworld people covered. Very pleasant was their day, as pleasant as the day of the cattle in the field. Like the cattle they knew of no enemies, and provided against no needs. And their end was the same.

"I grieved to think how brief the dream of the human intellect had been. It had committed suicide. It had set itself steadfastly toward comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanence as its watchwords, it had attained its hopes—to come to this at last. Once, life and property must have reached almost absolute safety. The rich had been assured of his wealth and comfort, the toiler assured of his life and work. No doubt in that perfect world there had been no unemployed problem, no social question left unsolved. And a great quiet had followed.

"It is a law of nature we overlook,

that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble. An animal perfectly in harmony with its environment is a perfect mechanism. Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change. Only those animals partake of intelligence that have to meet a huge variety of needs and dangers.

"So, as I see it, the upperworld man had drifted toward his feeble prettiness, and the underworld to mere mechanical industry. But that perfect state had lacked one thing even of mechanical perfection—absolute permanency. Apparently as time went on the feeding of the underworld, however it was effected, had become disjointed. Mother Necessity, who had been staved off for a few thousand years, came back again, and she began below. The underworld, being in contact with machinery which,

however perfect, still needs some little thought outside of habit, had probably retained, perforce, rather more initiative, if less of every other human character, than the upper. And when other meat failed them, they turned to what old habit had hitherto forbidden. So I say I saw it in my last view of the world of 810,701. It may be as wrong an explanation as mortal wit could invent. It is how the thing shaped itself to me, and as that I give it to you.

"After the fatigues, excitements, and terrors of the past days, and in spite of my grief, this seat and the tranquil view and the warm sunlight were very pleasant. I was very tired and sleepy, and soon my theorizing passed into dozing. Catching myself at that I took my own hint, and spreading myself out upon the turf, I had a long and refreshing sleep.

"I awoke a little before sunsetting. I now felt safe against being caught napping by the Morlocks, and

stretching myself I came on down the hill toward the white sphinx. I had my crowbar in one hand, and the other played with the matches in my pocket.

"And now came a most unexpected thing. As I approached the pedestal of the sphinx I found the bronze panels were open. They had slid down into grooves.

"At that I stopped short before them, hesitating to enter.

"Within was a small apartment, and on a raised place in the corner of this was the Time Machine. I had the small levers in my pocket. So here, after all my elaborate preparations for the siege of the white sphinx, was a meek surrender. I threw my iron bar away, almost sorry not to use it.

"A sudden thought came into my head as I stooped toward the portal. For once at least I grasped the mental operations of the Morlocks. Suppressing a strong inclination to laugh,

I stepped through the bronze frame and up to the Time Machine. I was surprised to find it had been carefully oiled and cleaned. I have suspected since that the Morlocks had even partially taken it to pieces while trying in their dim way to grasp its purpose.

"Now, as I stood and examined it, finding a pleasure in the mere touch of the contrivance, the thing I had expected happened. The bronze panels suddenly slid up and struck the frame with a clang. I was in the dark—trapped. So the Morlocks thought. At that I chuckled gleefully.

"I could already hear their murmuring laughter as they came toward me. Very calmly I tried to strike the match. I had only to fix on the levers and depart then like a ghost. But I had overlooked one little thing. The matches were of that abominable kind that light only on the box.

"You may imagine how all my calm vanished. The little brutes were close upon me. One touched me. I made a sweeping blow in the dark at them with the lever, and began to scramble into the saddle of the Machine. Then came one hand upon me and then another.

"Then I had simply to fight against their persistent fingers for my levers, and at the same time feel for the studs over which these fitted. One, indeed, they almost got away from me. As it slipped from my hand I had to butt in the dark with my head—I could hear the Morlock's skull ring—to recover it. It was a nearer thing than the fight in the forest, I think, this last scramble.

"But at last the lever was fixed and pulled over. The clinging hands slipped from me. The darkness presently fell from my eyes. I found myself in the same gray light and tumult I have already described.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Further Vision.

I HAVE already told you of the sickness and confusion that comes with time traveling. And this time I was not seated properly in the saddle, but sideways and in an unstable fashion. For an indefinite time I clung to the machine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how I went, and when I brought myself to look at the dials again I was amazed to find where I had arrived. One dial records days, another thousands of days, another millions of days, and another thousands of millions. Now instead of reversing the levers I had pulled them over so as to go forward with them, and when I came to look at these indicators I found that the

thousands hand was sweeping round as fast as the seconds hand of a watch, into futurity.

"Very cautiously, for I remembered my former headlong fall, I began to reverse my motion. Slower and slower went the circling hands, until the thousands one seemed motionless and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upon its scale. Still slower, until the gray haze around me became distincter, and dim outlines of a low hill and a sea became visible.

"But as my motion became slower there was, I found, no blinking change of day and night. A steady twilight brooded over the earth. And the band of light that had indicated the sun had, I now noticed, become fainter, had faded indeed to invisibility in the east, and in the west was increasingly broader and redder. The circling of the stars growing slower and slower had given place to creeping points of light. At

last, some time before I stopped, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast dome glowing with a dull heat. The work of the tidal drag was accomplished. The earth had come to rest with one face to the sun even as in our own time the moon faces the earth.

"I stopped very gently and sat upon the Time Machine looking round me.

"The sky was no longer blue. Northeastward it was inky black, and out of the blackness shone brightly and steadily the pale white stars. Overhead it was a deep Indian red, and starless, and southeastward it grew brighter to where, cut by the horizon, lay the motionless hull of the huge red sun.

"The rocks about me were of a harsh reddish color, and all the trace of life that I could see at first was the intensely green vegetation that covered every projecting point on its southeastern side. It was the same

rich green that one sees on forest moss or on the lichen in caves, plants which, like these, grow in a perpetual twilight.

"The Machine was standing on a sloping beach. The sea stretched away to the southwest to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed that the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt—pink under the lurid sky.

"There was a sense of oppression in my head and I noticed that I was breathing very fast. The sensations remind me of my only experience of mountaineering, and from that I judged the air was more rarified than it is now.

"Far away up the desolate slope I

heard a harsh scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond.

"The sound of its voice was so dismal that I shivered, and seated myself more firmly upon the Machine.

"Looking round me I saw that, quite near to me, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving slowly toward me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous crab-like creature. Can you imagine a crab as large as yonder table, with its numerous legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antennæ like carters' whips, waving and feeling, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side of its metallic front? Its back was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the numerous palps of its

complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it approached.

"As I stared at this sinister apparition crawling toward me, I felt a tickling on my cheeks as though a fly had alighted there.

"I tried to brush it away with my hand, but in a moment it returned, and almost immediately after another came near my ear. I struck at this and caught something threadlike. It was drawn swiftly out of my hand. With a frightful qualm I turned and saw I had grasped the antennæ of another monster crab that stood immediately behind me. Its evil eyes were wriggling on their stalks, its mouth was all alive with appetite, and its vast ungainly claws, smeared with green slime, were descending upon me.

"In a moment my hand was on the lever of the Time Machine, and I had place a month between myself and these monsters. But I found I was still on the same beach and I saw

them distinctly now as soon as I stopped. Dozens of them seemed to be crawling here and there in the somber light among the foliated sheets of intense green.

"I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform, poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurt one's lungs; all contributed to an appalling effect.

"I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun, the same dying sea, the same chill air, and the same crowd of earthly crustacea creeping in and out among the green weed and the red rocks.

"So I traveled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth's fate, tracing with a strange fascination how the sun was

growing larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebbing out. At last, more than thirty million years hence, the huge red-hot dome of the sun had come to obscure nearly a sixth part of the darkling heavens. Then it was I stopped, for the crawling multitude of crabs had disappeared, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts and lichens, seemed lifeless again.

"As soon as I stopped a bitter cold assailed me. The air felt keenly cold, and rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down. To the northeastward the glare of snow lay under the starlight of the sable sky, and I could see an undulating crest of pinkish white hillocks. There were fringes of ice along the sea margin, drifting masses further out, but the main expanse of that salt ocean, all bloody under the eternal sunset, was still unfrozen.

"I looked about me to see if any

traces of animals remained. A certain indefinable apprehension still kept me in the saddle of the Machine. I saw nothing moving, on earth or sky or sea. The green slime on the rocks alone testified that life was not extinct. A shallow sandbank had appeared in the sea and the water had receded from the beach. I fancied I saw some black object flopping about upon this bank, but it became motionless as I looked at it, and I judged my eye had been deceived and that the object was merely a rock. The stars in the sky were intensely bright and seemed to me to twinkle very little.

"Suddenly I noticed that the circular outline, westward, of the sun had changed, that a concavity, a bay, had appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a minute, perhaps, I stared aghast at this blackness that was creeping over the day, and then I realized that an eclipse was beginning. No doubt, now that the moon

was creeping ever nearer to the earth, and the earth to the sun, eclipses were of frequent occurrence.

"The darkness grew apace, a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and then the white flakes that were falling out of the air increased. The tide was creeping in with a ripple and a whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent—silent! It would be hard to convey to you the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives, were over. As the darkness thickened the eddying flakes became more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze grew to a moaning wind. I saw the black central shadow of the eclipse sweeping toward me. In

another moment the pale stars alone were visible. All else was rayless obscurity. The sky was absolutely black.

"A horror of this great darkness came upon me. The cold that smote to my marrow, and the pain I felt in breathing, overcame me. I shivered and a deadly nausea seized me. Then like a red-hot bow in the sky appeared the edge of the sun.

"I got off the Machine to recover myself. I felt giddy and incapable of facing the return journey. As I stood sick and confused I saw again the moving thing upon the shoal—there was no mistake now that it was a moving thing—against the red water of the sea. It was a round thing, of the size of a football perhaps, or bigger; it seemed black against the weltering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about. Then I felt I was fainting. A terrible dread of lying helpless in that remote twilight sustained me while I clambered upon the saddle.

"So I came home. For a long time I must have been insensible upon the Machine. The blinking succession of the days and nights was resumed, the sun grew golden again, the sky blue. I breathed with greater freedom. The fluctuating contours of the land ebbed and flowed. The hands spun backward upon the dials. At last I saw again the dim shadows of homes, the evidences of decadent humanity. These, too, changed and passed, and others came. Presently when the millions dial was at zero I slackened speed, and began to recognize our own pretty and familiar architecture. The thousands hand ran back to the starting point, the night and day flapped slower and slower. Then the old walls of the laboratory came round me. Very gently now I diminished the pace of the mechanism.

"I saw one little thing that seemed odd to me. I think I have told you

that when I set out, before my velocity became very high, Mrs. Watchett had walked across the room, traveling, as it seemed to me, like a rocket. As I returned I passed again across that minute when she traversed the laboratory. But now every motion appeared to be the exact inversion of her previous one. The door at the lower end opened and she glided quietly up the laboratory, back foremost, and disappeared behind the door by which she had previously entered.

"Then I stopped the Machine, and saw about me again the old familiar laboratory, my tools, my appliances, just as I had left them. I got off the thing very shakily and sat down upon my bench. For several minutes I trembled violently. Then I became calmer. Around me was my old workshop again, exactly as it had been. I might have slept there and the whole thing have been a dream.

"And yet not exactly. The thing

had started from the southeast corner of the laboratory. It had come to rest again in the northwest, against the wall, where you will find it. That gives you the exact distance from my little lawn to the pedestal of the white sphinx.

"For a time my brain became stagnant. Presently I got up and came through the passage here, limping, because my heel was still painful, and feeling sorely begrimed. I saw the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the table by the door. I found the date was indeed to-day, and looking at the timepiece, saw the hour was almost eight o'clock. I heard your voices and the clatter of plates. I hesitated—I felt so sick and weak. Then I sniffed good wholesome meat, and opened the door. You know the rest. I washed and dined, and now I am telling you the story.

"I know," he said after a while, "that all this will be absolutely in-

credible to you, but to me the one incredible thing is that I am here to-night in this old familiar room, looking into your wholesome faces, and telling you all these strange adventures."

He looked at the Medical Man.

"No; I cannot expect you to believe it. Take it as a lie, or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race, until I have hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroke of art to enhance its interest. And taking it as a story, what do you think of it?"

He took up his pipe and began in his old accustomed manner to tap upon the bars of the grate.

CHAPTER XIV.

After the Time Traveler's Story.

THERE was a momentary stillness. Then chairs began to creak and shoes to scrape upon the carpet. I took my eyes off the Time Traveler's face and looked round at his audience. They were in the dark and little spots of color swam before them. The Medical Man seemed absorbed in the contemplation of our host. The Editor was looking hard at the end of his cigar—the sixth. The Journalist fumbled for his watch. The others as far as I remember were motionless.

The Editor stood up with a sigh.

"What a pity it is you're not a writer of stories!" he said, putting

his hand on the Time Traveler's shoulder.

"You don't believe it?"

"Well——"

"I thought not." The Time Traveler turned round to us. "Where are the matches?" he said. He lit one and spoke over his pipe, puffing, "To tell you all the truth—I hardly believe it myself—and yet——"

His eyes fell with a mute inquiry upon the withered white flowers upon the little table. Then he turned over the hand holding his pipe, and I saw he was looking at some half healed scars on his knuckles.

The Medical Man rose, came to the lamp, and examined the flowers. "The gynœcium's odd," he said.

The Psychologist leaned forward to see, holding out his hand for a specimen.

"I'm hanged if it isn't a quarter to one," said the Journalist. "How shall we get home?"

"Plenty of cabs at the station," said the Psychologist.

"It's a curious thing," said the Medical Man; "but I certainly don't know the natural order of these flowers. May I have them?"

The Time Traveler hesitated. Then suddenly, "Certainly not."

"Where did you really get them?" said the Medical Man.

The Time Traveler put his hand to his head. He spoke like one who was trying to keep hold of an idea that eluded him. "They were put into my pocket by Weena—when I traveled into Time." He stared round the room. "I'm d——d if it isn't all going. This room and you and the atmosphere of everyday is too much for my memory. Did I ever make a Time Machine, or a model of a Time Machine, or is it all only a dream? They say life is a dream, a precious poor dream at times—but I can't stand another that won't fit. It's madness. And

where did the dream come from? I must look at that Machine. If there *is* one."

He caught up the lamp swiftly and carried it flaring redly through the door into the corridor.

We followed him.

There in the flickering light of the lamp was the Machine, sure enough, squat, ugly, and askew, a thing of brass, ebony, ivory, and translucent, glimmering quartz. Solid to the touch—for I put out my hand and felt the rail of it—and with brown spots and smears upon the ivory, and bits of grass and moss upon the lower parts, and one rail bent awry.

The Time Traveler put the lamp down on the bench, and ran his hand along the broken rail.

"It's all right now," he said. "The story I told you was true. I'm sorry to have brought you out here—in the cold."

He took up the lamp, and in an

absolute silence we returned to the smoking room.

The Time Traveler came into the hall with us and helped the Editor on with his coat. The Medical Man looked into our host's face and, with a certain hesitation, told him he was suffering from overwork, at which he laughed hugely. I remember him standing in the open doorway bawling good-night.

I shared a cab with the Editor. He thought the tale a "gaudy lie." For my own part I was unable to come to any conclusion about the matter. The story was so fantastic and incredible, the telling so credible and sober. I lay awake most of the night thinking about it. I determined to go next day and see the Time Traveler again.

I was told he was in the laboratory, and being on easy terms in the house I went up to him. The laboratory, however, was empty. I stared for a minute at the Time Machine and

put out my hand and touched a lever. At that the squat, substantial-looking mass swayed like a bough shaken by the wind. Its instability startled me extremely, and I had a queer reminiscence of childish days when I used to be forbidden to meddle. I came back through the corridor. The Time Traveler met me in the smoking room. He was coming from the house. He had a small camera under one arm and a knapsack under the other. He laughed when he saw me and gave me an elbow to shake.

"I'm frightfully busy," he said; "with that thing in there."

"But is it not some hoax?" said I. "Do you really travel through Time?"

"Really and truly I do." And he looked frankly into my eyes.

He hesitated. His eye wandered round the room. "I only want half an hour," he said. "I know why you came, and it's awfully good of

you. There's some magazines here. If you'll stop to lunch I'll prove this time traveling to you up to the hilt. Specimens and all. If you'll forgive my leaving you now?"

I consented, hardly comprehending then the full import of his words, and he nodded and went on down the corridor. I heard the door of the laboratory slam, seated myself in a chair, and took up the *New Review*. What was he going to do before lunch time? Then suddenly I was reminded by an advertisement that I had promised to meet Richardson the publisher at two. I looked at my watch, and saw I could barely save that engagement. I got up and went down the passage to tell the Time Traveler.

As I took hold of the handle of the door I heard an exclamation oddly truncated at the end, and a click and a thud. A gust of air whirled round me as I opened the door, and from within came the

sound of broken glass falling on the floor. The Time Traveler was not there. I seemed to see a ghostly indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of black and brass for a moment, a figure so transparent that the bench behind with its sheets of drawings was absolutely distinct; but this phantasm I immediately perceived was illusory. The Time Machine had gone. Save for a subsiding stir of dust the central space of the laboratory was empty. A pane of the skylight had apparently just been blown in.

I felt an unreasonable amazement. I knew that something strange had happened, and for a moment could not distinguish what the strange thing might be. As I stood staring, the door into the garden opened, and the man-servant appeared.

We looked at each other. Then ideas began to come.

"Has Mr. —— gone out that way?" said I.

"No, sir. No one has come out this way. I was expecting to find him here."

At that I understood. At the risk of disappointing Richardson I remained waiting for the Time Traveler, waiting for the second, perhaps still stranger, story, and the specimens and photographs he would bring with him.

But I am beginning to fear now that I must wait a lifetime for that. The Time Traveler vanished three years ago. Up to the present he has not returned, and when he does return he will find his home in the hands of strangers and his little gathering of auditors broken up forever. Filby has exchanged poetry for playwriting, and is a rich man—as literary men go—and extremely unpopular. The Medical Man is dead, the Journalist is in India, and the Psychologist has succumbed to paralysis. Some of the other men I used to meet there have dropped as

completely out of existence as if they, too, had traveled off upon some similar anachronisms. And so, ending in a kind of dead wall, the story of the Time Machine must remain for the present at least.

THE END.